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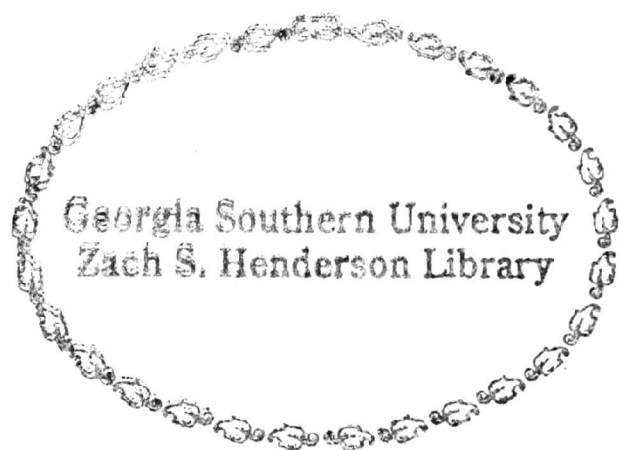
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CHANGE THEORY IN THE MIDDLE:
AN ETHNOHISTORY
OF A RURAL GEORGIA
MIDDLE SCHOOL

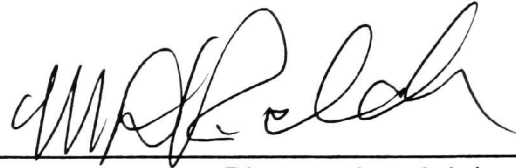
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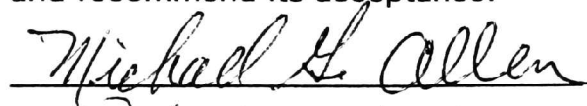
To the Graduate College:

This dissertation entitled "Change Theory in the Middle: An Ethnohistory of a Rural Georgia Middle School" and written by Jody Jones Woodrum is presented to the College of Graduate Studies of Georgia Southern University. I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education with a major in Educational Administration.



Dissertation Advisor

We have reviewed this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Department Chair

Accepted for the College of Graduate Studies

CHANGE THEORY IN THE MIDDLE:
AN ETHNOHISTORY
OF A RURAL GEORGIA
MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Dissertation
Presented to
the College of Graduate Studies of
Georgia Southern University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Administration

by
Jody Jones Woodrum
June 1996

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DEDICATION

This effort at understanding change in one school over an eighteen-year period is first dedicated to the staff at the school. Over 100 different staff members affected the changes there. It is this researcher's most profound wish that the teachers in this school realize, with pride, the amount of responsibility they have for accomplishing something so difficult and crucial to the field of education. They became leaders for improving one school with the exclusive reason of making it a better place for students and learning. Included in this are the administrators, past and present, that listened to their own "moral purposes" and helped the staff collaborate to develop a common direction for theirs.

It is dedicated to those outside the school, the county office personnel, the community members, and the local university professors, that provided this staff with encouragement and tangible support. Without their assistance, the change toward use of the middle school concept may have never taken place.

This study is dedicated to all those at Georgia Southern University who made it possible. Years of work have gone into starting the first doctoral program at this institution. I am immensely honored to be a part of the culmination of these efforts by others, many of whom I will never know. Many professors have encouraged me to become a part of this program. Thank you, Dr. Malcolm Katz, for encouraging me to take part and Dr. Lars Bjork, for assisting me in understanding qualitative, ethnohistorical, change.

About the members of my committee, Dr. Garth Petrie, who stepped in to help, and Dr. Robert Stevens, who asked thought-provoking questions, I cannot say "thank you" enough! For Dr. Mike Allen, who has been my

middle school mentor since Appalachian State, words will not express my appreciation. It was especially meaningful for me to have you by my side throughout this dissertation process. And finally, Dr. Mike Richardson. I won't even try to say it. For the black hat and the white one, just know that I will find a way to pass it on . . . , and don't forget to wear your seat belt!

For those in Cohort I, this study is dedicated. The network and friendship this doctoral program has begun have created change forces that South Georgia can only benefit from. You are a group of practicing administrators that will make a mark on the education of young people, just as you have touched me.

Last, to my family in three states, I dedicate this study. Together, you include educators, administrators, and service professionals. You touch every walk of life from law enforcement, to business, to ecology, to armed services, to education. You have the power to help change happen in so many lives. You have helped change mine. To my Dad, teacher first, coach second, and father always, you have been my first educational change agent. When everything else I've ever learned fails me, I think about how you would handle the situation--and I know I can't go far wrong because you have a firm "moral purpose." To my son, the newest member of the family, you have been my most recent educational change agent. I see education from a different perspective now, and I know it is a more student-centered one. To my family, I hope all of you feel as much pride for your role in this as I feel in you.

ABSTRACT

This study provided an analytic description of the transition of one rural Georgia school as its staff sought to embrace the middle school concept. Development of such a description required that the researcher examine the school through the filter or sieve of change theory and in an holistic manner, using techniques appropriate to ethnohistorical, qualitative research. Specifically, the description spanned an eighteen-year, bounded period and used participant observation, individual and group interviews, and documentation to uncover the meaning participants in the school attached to the changes.

While Georgia provided an incentive grant to encourage eligible schools to move toward the middle school concept, the specific state criteria excluded some schools from qualification. Farpoint Middle School (masked) did not meet the grant's grade level requirements until years after its transition was made. Because the school was ineligible for the incentive grant, the school district never raised the possibility of looking at the middle school concept. Thus, the transition toward use of the middle school concept that occurred at Farpoint Middle School was neither mandated by the state nor influenced by the school district.

The focus of this study, therefore, was to understand why the transition occurred there and how it was accomplished. Accordingly, the researcher sought to determine the connection between the events, roles, and factors relevant to the school's changes from 1978 to 1996. In turn, these were compared to the related literature: national reform movement, middle school movement, organizational theory of schools, traditional roles

of teachers and administrators, university influence upon public schools, participatory decision making, schools as learning organizations, change theory, and factors and roles leading to change. The latter included a detailed look at change theory from science and business perspectives--particularly the concepts of paradigm, paradigm shifts, and paradigm shifters.

The study determined that those inside and outside the school agreed that the change toward use of the middle school concept occurred from inside. Specifically, a small group of individual teachers connected with professors at the local university and influenced the principal to develop an interest in the middle school concept. The principal, in turn, involved the rest of the staff and a collective decision was made to pursue the middle school concept for better meeting the needs of the school's students. Various external factors such as federal, regional, state, county, and university influences were found to directly or indirectly support the changes going on inside the school throughout the eighteen-year period.

The bulk of this transition took place over a five-year period from 1988 to 1993, called "The Middle Years." However, the ten years prior to 1988, "The Early and Between Years," were crucial to setting the stage to explain how the school was so receptive to such a shift. The three years after 1993, "The Later Years," were included to show the continued progress, despite the relocation of the school and the loss of both the original core group of teachers and the long-term principal.

No single body of research was found to explain the circumstances of change at Farpoint Middle School. Instead data analysis centered around the divergent analysis styles of theoretical application and synthesis, as explained by LeCompte and Preissle. Accordingly, pieces of research and

analytic frames from various fields were used to offer a collection of conclusions. This study, in the end, offered an example of and reinforcement for the paradigm shift being made in educational change theory: organizations change from the inside, but their changes must be supported from the outside.

VITA

Jody J. Woodrum is a Doctoral student at Georgia Southern University, where this study is the first qualitative dissertation to be completed in the new Doctor of Education program. She has been an administrator and/or teacher at a "rural school in Southeast Georgia" since 1982, first a middle then an elementary school. She has also been a member of the adjunct graduate faculty of the Middle Grades/Secondary Department of Education at Georgia Southern University. She is originally from North Carolina, where she completed undergraduate and graduate work at Appalachian State University.

Learning and writing are personal priorities. She has published in the journal for the Georgia Middle School Association/Georgia Association of Middle School Principals and is learning about book publishing by assisting with a book entitled The Politics of School Leadership. The researcher has chaired a steering committee for an initial self-study through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and has served on several visiting committees. She has also been an NDN Project Wr.I.T.&E. trainer and consultant for several local schools.

The researcher has lived in Statesboro, Georgia with her family for over ten years. Her husband is in regional law enforcement and is an investigator and writer in his own right. Her son is in elementary school, where he enjoys writing and illustrating his own stories.

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CHAPTER 1

General Introduction

The relationship between society and its schools is characterized by conflicting expectations. Simultaneously, schools are expected to transmit knowledge and conserve society's values, while serving as the agent of change. Schools typically accommodate these contradictory demands by making few if any substantial changes in structure or curriculum. As the school fulfills its roles as transmitter of knowledge and conservator of values, the changes that occur are typically first-order changes that alter little within the organizational structure (Cuban, 1988). Thus, the societal expectation that schools transmit knowledge, act as conservators of values, and preserve the status quo comprises a comfortable role for education (Sarason, 1990).

Yet, schools are charged with the primary responsibility for preparing young people in our society as they face a changing world (Owens, 1991). In order to accomplish this, schools must participate in second-order changes, those that create changes in the basic organizational features (Cuban, 1988). The demand for such changes, along with the call for schools to become agents of change, usually originates outside the school (Cuban, 1988; Sarason, 1990). The external pressures for schools to change have come from a variety of sources in recent decades. Reform efforts have emerged out of society's demands that schools demonstrate accountability, assist in improving the economic situation, attend to the changes in society, and prepare citizens for post-industrial society (Murphy & Beck, 1994).

Schools, in general, have been the focus of reform for decades; concurrently, specific schools for students in the middle grades have also been in transition (George & Alexander, 1993; George, Stevenson, Thomason, & Beane, 1992). By the 1960s, the call for junior high school reform increased, and improvements, through use of the middle school concept, were sought to better address the developmental and related educational needs of students in this age group (George et al., 1992). Though the changes were not always predicated on sound educational reasons, external pressures such as enrollment concerns and the requirement to desegregate led many school districts to embrace the middle school concept. However, the resulting grade level arrangements did not necessarily produce a greater emphasis on meeting the needs of young adolescent learners (George et al., 1992; Lounsbury, 1991).

By 1985, every state in the South, except Mississippi and Tennessee, offered teacher certification in middle grades education (McEwin & Allen, 1985). In Georgia and several other states, this certification was mandatory for beginning teachers in applicable grade levels. By 1987, thirteen Georgia institutions of higher learning offered a middle grades preparation program for teachers in grades four through eight (McEwin & Alexander, 1987). Beginning that same year, Quality Basic Education (QBE) mandates and incentive grants encouraged public schools in Georgia to move toward acceptance of the middle school concept. The criteria for qualification as a Georgia middle school were broad and based on the accepted middle school characteristics (Georgia Board of Education, 1990; Gilmer, 1986). However, among other items on the list, the criteria required that recognized schools meet specific configuration guidelines.

By the second half of the 1980s, teachers in Georgia's public schools had access to both teacher certification programs at the college level and financial incentives from the state emphasizing adoption of the middle school concept. Despite this encouragement, however, a 1990 survey revealed a gap between the characteristics of the responding middle schools and the tenets of the middle school concept (Allen & Sheppard, 1991). Though the state had a mandatory middle grade certification and new state incentives for middle school development, a discrepancy existed in Georgia.

By 1981, Farpoint Middle School was a combination elementary and junior high school located in rural, South Georgia. It contained grades five through seven and housed all of the young adolescents in Deneb County. Fifth grade students were grouped in blocks, with each student under the instruction of one teacher in the morning and another in the afternoon. Sixth and seventh grade students attended six classes each day with at least six different teachers. Farpoint Middle School was a middle school in name only (Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

Since 1985 the state of Georgia had planned to offer financial incentives to those counties adopting the middle school concept (Gilmer, 1986). Specifically, a thirteen percent incentive became available in 1990 for schools meeting the state's middle school criteria and the accompanying grade level configuration (Georgia Board of Education, 1990). However, because Farpoint Middle School was unable to qualify for these state incentives, no county-level mandates existed for it to move toward implementation of the state's middle school criteria and the middle school concept.

Until 1995, Farpoint Middle School was composed of grades five through seven. Because of its configuration, it was unable to meet

Georgia's middle school grade level requirement. Therefore, it did not receive the additional state funds for participating middle schools. Although excluded from receiving state incentive grants, Farpoint Middle School made continuous progress toward implementing the middle school concept.

Statement of the Problem

The focus of this study was to understand the nature of the change process within one rural school, Farpoint Middle School, over a bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period. From 1978 to 1996 this school made a shift toward use of the middle school concept; it did so without a district mandate to change. Examining the sources of change on and within this school may contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of the change process in educational organizations.

The circumstances and processes through which this transition was accomplished made it unique in time and place. Before 1996, Farpoint Middle School had a philosophy guided by the middle school concept. Numerous changes took place, over an eighteen-year period, to transform this school into one that was actively concerned with meeting the needs of its student population. This change toward use of the middle school concept was achieved despite the lack of financial incentives from the state or district mandates to change.

Purpose of the Study

As participant observer (McCall & Simmons, 1969) at Farpoint Middle School during preliminary experiences, the researcher was aware of changes within the school, particularly as related to the staff's approach to students. Informal discussions with middle school staff members from other schools led the researcher to question the basis of these changes. Subsequent

research into organizational change theory strengthened the researcher's desire to understand how the changes occurred at Farpoint Middle School.

The area of organizational change, particularly as related to schools, offered conflicting ideas about what changes typically occur and how they take place (Giacquinta, 1973; Cuban, 1988; Owens, 1991; Murphy & Beck, 1994). Yet, educators may benefit from a better understanding of what transpires in schools, including how and why changes occur, in order to prepare for and influence future shifts and trends. Specifically, this researcher sought to determine what changes took place over an extended period of time at Farpoint Middle School and how and why these changes occurred.

Importance of the Study

The findings of this study may contribute to a clearer understanding of the interaction between external and internal change forces in the organizational development of a middle school in rural, South Georgia. Specifically, the study offered a detailed description of the change processes at Farpoint Middle School. It reflected the perspective of those who experienced the changes

Ethnographic, qualitative research of particular settings is not sufficient for broad generalizations; complex events in one situation are preclusive to replication in another (Jorgensen, 1989). However, this longitudinal research into a single school's transitional development may contribute to the knowledge base of change theory upon which future theory may be based. More specifically, it may contribute to the literature explaining how internal and external forces influence one another in an educational organization. This in turn may further enhance our ability to

understand, explain, and predict how change forces may impact school settings in general.

This account, therefore, may offer practical insights for others involved with schools by encouraging other teachers and administrators to examine their roles as change agents in schools. Understanding and explaining this phenomena may eventually facilitate and enhance the ability of others in educational organizations to successfully engage in change processes. Specifically, teachers and other school-related individuals who understand their respective roles as change agents may have a greater potential for enhancing their role in future change processes (Fullan, 1993). Similarly, administrators who are aware of this and related research, may more actively seek strategies for empowering teachers. Thus, this study may help administrators in other schools begin to understand the value of the contributions they and their teachers may make to large scale change.

Typically, studies of middle schools have emphasized the components common to the middle school concept and the related curriculum content (Karr, Green, & Koulogeorge, 1994; Lewis, 1993). The majority of the middle school studies have been based on suburban and urban settings (Bayless, Massaro, Bailey, Coley, Holladay, & McDonald, 1992; Finnan & Hopfenberg, 1994; Levine, Levine, & Eubanks, 1984; Lewis, 1991; Lewis, 1993; Lewis, 1994; Thompson, 1992). Other studies have explored administrative actions or management approaches to creating a mandated move from junior high organization to middle school concept (Bayless et al., 1992; Beck, 1992; Bentley & Campbell, 1986; California State Department of Education, 1993; Kentucky State Department of Education, 1991; Midgley & Maehr, 1992; Thomas, 1993; Thompson, 1992). A number of middle school studies have examined this transition from the perspective of

school reform and change in general (Anderman & Urdan, 1995; Finnan & Hopfenberg, 1994; Oakes, Quartz, Gong, Guiton, & Lipton, 1993; Polite, 1992; Polite, 1994; Useem, 1994; Wood, 1993). However, few of these were ethnographic in nature (Finnan & Hopfenberg, 1994; Polite, 1992; Polite, 1994). Thus, this study, emphasizing the transition of a rural, South Georgia school toward the middle school concept, is important, not only in its focus, but also in the process through which it was conducted.

In addition, this study is of value in that it examined the role of an institution of higher education in facilitating a public school's move towards the middle school concept. The influence of a local university may have been an important external factor that enhanced the change process of Farpoint Middle School. Studies that examined the influence of colleges and universities in stimulating and supporting educational reform in middle schools were small in number (Beck, 1992; Karr et al., 1994). Therefore, this study may not only contribute to building theory, but may advance an understanding of the relationship between an institution of higher learning and a middle school in transition. As a result, this study, paired with similar research, may help verify and reinforce the importance of colleges and universities in the public school change process.

The theory of change in schools can only be tested when a sufficient amount of data are analyzed and compared. Through generalizations and theoretical explanations, the study of Farpoint Middle School's change processes may contribute to the sparse bank of knowledge describing how internal and external forces influence change in organizations. At the very least, it will lead to further questions which may guide future research related to this phenomenon.

Assumptions

This study focused on one rural public school in South Georgia that was in continual transition toward the middle school concept. The external and internal factors that influenced the changes were described through examination of a bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period. The ethnohistorical (Schumacher, 1972; Bjork, 1983) format used techniques associated with qualitative research.

Prior to the study's inception, the researcher made several assumptions. The most significant of these was that by 1996 Farpoint Middle School had progressed toward implementation of the middle school concept. This assumption was based on the firsthand knowledge of the researcher, who worked in this school for over ten years and participated in and observed events as they occurred. This assumption of progress made toward implementation of the middle school concept infused most of the interview questions asked of respondents and all of the conclusions reached by the researcher. Therefore, this basic assumption may have affected the outcome of the study.

In addition, the researcher assumed that the transition toward the middle school concept was a positive change in that, during 1978 this school did not exhibit middle school concept-related characteristics, but by 1996 it demonstrated implementation of relevant characteristics. This bias toward the middle school concept, while supported by the literature (Clark & Clark, 1994; Eichhorn, 1966; George & Shewey, 1994; Lipsitz, 1984), caused the researcher to view the components and philosophy of Farpoint Middle School as advantageous, desirable elements.

The researcher also made an assumption that most of the staff of Farpoint Middle School believed the changes over the last eighteen years

were positive. This bias may have influenced the development of interview questions and the interactions between the researcher and the respondents during participant observations.

An additional assumption involved the relationship between the faculty of Farpoint Middle School and the researcher. The researcher formerly worked at Farpoint Middle School in an administrative and supervisory capacity, with most of its current teachers. Throughout this study, the researcher assumed that voluntary subjects reacted in an unbiased fashion to the research and researcher.

The last assumption involved the use of qualitative methodology. This process assumed that the researcher was able to account for the effect her presence may have had on the respondents and the situation under study. The researcher assumed that she had an "observer effect" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 109) on the situation. However, she accounted for the probability of this effect by seeking multiple sources of data to corroborate or disconfirm findings through triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Objectives of the Study

During the course of this study, schools for young adolescents in Georgia had various grade level configurations (Allen & Sheppard, 1991); some met the requirements for state funding of middle school elements while others did not. Farpoint Middle School did not meet the requirements for incentive funding. Yet, it achieved a transition toward the middle school concept by making changes that were neither funded by the state nor pushed by district mandates.

By 1996 Farpoint Middle School had developed a philosophy based on the middle school concept. The changes that took place over an eighteen-

year period transformed this school into one that focused upon meeting the unique needs of the student population it served. This study examined the change processes in which the school and its faculty engaged during this transition.

This research study was framed by one general question (Miles & Huberman, 1994): How did the change toward use of the middle school concept take place at Farpoint Middle School? In short, the original quest was to determine the reasons this particular school made the transition toward the middle school concept.

During preliminary experiences within the bounded (Stake, 1988) period from 1978 to 1996 at Farpoint Middle School, the researcher noticed several possible external factors, including the educational reform movement, state emphases, county developments, and the support of the local university for implementing the middle school concept. Similarly, she noted possible internal influences inside the school, which ranged from school level leadership to the development of faculty expertise.

Through use of participant observation and other techniques associated with qualitative research (Jorgensen, 1989), this study identified and described the external and internal factors that influenced Farpoint Middle School to move toward the middle school concept. A review of the related literature on change theory assisted in formulating an explanation of the school's transition, especially as it related to changes in organizations in general. Thus, the literature and the data were used to develop a set of generalizations and to build an "analytic description of a complex social organization" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 3). This analytic description used the propositions and concepts of change theory as its basic guide. Therefore, one major purpose of this study was to systematically and

thoroughly describe the specifics surrounding change at Farpoint Middle School in order to build a theoretical (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) explanation for the school's development during the bounded (Stake, 1988) period from 1978 to 1996.

Therefore, the research objectives that directed the study were to:

- 1) provide, through collection and analysis of data gained from documentation and interviews, an ethnohistorical (Schumacher, 1972; Bjork, 1983) description of the external and internal factors that influenced Farpoint Middle School to move towards the middle school concept;
- 2) identify, review, and summarize the literature that assist in explaining the factors that led to the transition of Farpoint Middle School towards the middle school concept;
- 3) generate and develop a set of generalizations based on the data contained in the ethnohistorical (Schumacher, 1972; Bjork, 1983) account;
- 4) build upon the generalizations and move toward a theoretical (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) explanation for the development of Farpoint Middle School.

The objectives of this longitudinal study were to understand the factors associated with Farpoint Middle School's move towards the middle school concept and to develop a theoretical explanation of this phenomenon.

Procedures

The unit of study for this investigation was a single rural school in South Georgia. The goal was to understand the external and internal factors that were associated with change over the bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-

year period from 1978 to 1996 as Farpoint Middle School moved towards implementation of the middle school concept.

According to Sarason (1990), changes in schools must be examined using a systems approach that looks at the myriad of complexities and attempts to understand the interrelatedness of the parts. Therefore, the only way to comprehensively examine the changes in which Farpoint Middle School had been engaged was to use techniques associated with qualitative research. Use of qualitative research provided the best opportunity for looking at this school holistically, as a system in which changes in one area impacted on other aspects. Therefore, the selection of research methodology was predetermined by the objective of the study (Bjork, 1983; Lofland, 1971; Schumacher, 1972).

Because the main purpose of the study revolved around describing the changes at the school during its transition, the study was descriptive rather than predictive, and qualitative in nature, utilizing ethnographic methodology (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Specifically, the objectives of the study were explored through participant observation. According to McCall and Simmons (1969), participant observation is "a characteristic style of research which makes use of a number of methods and techniques-- observation, informant interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing, and participation with self-analysis" (p. i).

The ethnohistorical (Schumacher, 1972; Bjork, 1983), longitudinal aspects of this study enhanced the understanding of the school's transition from an holistic perspective. As LeCompte and Preissle (1993) explained, ethnography, with its "holistic emphasis" (p. 33), was appropriate for "analyzing the content and meaning of human behavior" (p. 33). The techniques of historical research, studying the past through written

documents and artifacts, were combined with ethnographic techniques, studying "current behavior--verbal and nonverbal" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 33), to execute this research study. Use of this in-depth ethnohistorical approach was a crucial component for allowing the researcher to accomplish her objectives (Schumacher, 1972; Bjork, 1983).

Although the literature on organizational change provided a "foreshadowed notion" (Malinowski, 1922) about the factors and relationships that influenced change at Farpoint Middle School, a constant comparison process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used throughout the study to refine these perspectives and categories, as well as identify factors that could assist the researcher in understanding the change process at Farpoint Middle School between 1978 and 1996.

Limitations

This study was limited to a description of one school over a period of eighteen years. That description was based upon recall of and available documentation from the past. Therefore, the study relied on the way individuals viewed the past, as they remembered it, rather than on the way they viewed the events at the time they occurred. This recall may have been inaccurate or distorted by individual needs or time.

Though the researcher avoided a confessional style (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 372), she attempted to deconstruct, rather than ignore, the possible influence she had on the interviewees in particular. As caveats of the study, her biases and "taken-for-granted notions" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 372) were exposed to the extent appropriate and feasible.

The researcher served as both teacher and administrator in this school for years. As an administrator, the researcher supervised many current staff members of Farpoint Middle School. Therefore, the decision of individual

staff members determined their personal participation in this study. This agreement assured the researcher that staff members were willing to participate and did not perceive this venture as forced in any way. The approval process was built on the trust between the staff and the researcher since it could not be forced upon them.

This study was an analytic description of one school's transition during an eighteen-year period, and was, by nature, an ethnohistorical study using qualitative techniques. As such, it utilized participant observation to devise an analytical description of one situation. Therefore, one of the limits was that this was "an empirical application and modification of scientific theory rather than an efficient and powerful test of such a theory" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 3). Alone, it was not sufficient for use in testing change theory. Similarly, because participant observation was a major method of collecting data, some limitations such as "observer effect" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 109) were inherent. However, participant observation has been proven viable and useful in contributing to the field of administrative science (McCall & Simmons, 1969).

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were uniquely defined for this study:

A change agent is an individual who is aware of the nature of change and contributes to the change process in a significant way.

Change forces are the internal and/or external influences on an organization.

An educational organization is an institution for teaching children, particularly public schools.

An ethnohistorical study is one in which the long-term events and characteristics of a case study are examined from the perspective of those involved in the situation.

An interview is a qualitative research technique for acquiring data through verbal probing of individual or groups of respondents.

A junior high school is an educational organization for young adolescents that utilizes the same structure and style as a secondary or high school.

A middle school is an educational organization for young adolescents that utilizes the structure and style that is considered developmentally appropriate for young adolescents.

The middle school concept is the philosophy that guides the structure and style of middle schools; it is considered developmentally appropriate and responsive to the unique needs of young adolescents.

Participant observation is a qualitative research technique for uncovering meaning from the perspective of the researched, accomplished through some degree of researcher immersion in the daily lives of those under study.

Triangulation is a qualitative research method through which data received by one method or source is verified by use of additional methods or sources.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Schools are complex organizations (Giacquinta, 1973). Typically, educational organizations carry the societal expectation of preserving and transmitting culture, for teaching the society's traditional values (Owens, 1991). However, another goal of schools in society is to provide service to and foster changes in children (Giacquinta, 1973). Educational organizations are held responsible for creating social change. In fact, "there are few, if any, social problems for which explanations and solutions do not in some way involve the school" (Sarason, 1982, p. 7).

Although schools cannot prevent the influence of the environment (Giacquinta, 1973), the "strength of the status quo--its underlying axioms, its pattern of power relationships, its sense of tradition and therefore what seems right, natural, and proper--almost automatically rules out options for change in that status quo" (Sarason, 1990, p. 35). First-order changes, those that usually take place in schools, "try to make what exists more efficient and effective without disturbing the basic organizational features" (Cuban, 1988, p. 93). Second-order changes, by their very nature, however, are required to position schools to accomplish this task. These second order changes "seek to alter the fundamental ways that organizations are put together because of major dissatisfaction with present arrangements" (Cuban, 1988, p. 93). Because the role of change agent is more difficult to fulfill, the desire and impetus for second-order change has typically originated outside educational organizations (Cuban, 1988; Sarason, 1990).

Similarly, while schools are expected to improve society, society greatly impacts upon schools as well. "Schools can be a vehicle for social change, but let us not overestimate the strength, actual or potential, of that impact. Far more powerful is the impact of society on schools" (Sarason, 1990, p. 36). The changes in society result in changes in schools; "the fabric of American society is being rewoven in some places and unraveling in others, resulting in changes that are having an increasingly significant impact on schooling" (Murphy & Beck, 1994, p. 7). Schools are vulnerable to the influences of their environment; either alterations are made under outside pressure to do so, or changes are blocked under opposition from outside pressure (Giacquinta, 1973). Educational organizations, with their interrelated parts closely tied to society, respond to upheavals in society. The levels of resistance to change are similar in schools and in society; "the turmoil accompanying these social changes will also accompany the accommodations the schools seek to make" (Sarason, 1990, p. 35).

This study was designed to examine the changes made by one school, Farpoint Middle School, in rural South Georgia from 1978 to 1996. During the bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period, this school moved toward utilization of the middle school concept to better meet the needs of its young adolescent learners. The researcher sought to examine and understand this transition; therefore, the study revolved around questions concerning what the changes were and why they occurred.

As a result, several areas of the literature were examined to allow the researcher to interpret the ethnohistorical, qualitative data obtained: national reform movement, middle school movement, organizational theory of schools, traditional roles of teachers and administrators, university influence upon public schools, participatory decision making, schools as

learning organizations, change theory, and factors and roles leading to change.

National Reform Movement

National Reform Prior to 1983

Since the National Education Association commissioned several groups to study educational issues in the 1890s, national commissions have served to articulate the need for educational reform in the United States (Wimpelberg & Ginsberg, 1988). Each report reflected the expectations of its period and offered general suggestions for change. For example, during each decade since the 1890s, organizations such as the National Education Association, the Progressive Education Association, the Carnegie Foundation, and the Cleveland Foundation sponsored reports on education in America (Ginsberg & Plank, 1995). This method of drawing attention to education through a national commission process "persists as a genre of policy influencing activity" (Wimpelberg & Ginsberg, 1988, p. 13).

These efforts reflected the "reform mood of their particular times" (Wimpelberg & Ginsberg, 1988, p. 14); yet, they were written with such general recommendations that specific outcomes were ambiguously derived. "Thus, cause and effect relationships are difficult to pinpoint, and proposals for change have to be laid out in abstracted form" (Wimpelberg & Ginsberg, 1988, p. 15). The reports offered little in the way of support for actual implementation of recommendations (Ginsberg & Plank, 1995; Wimpelberg & Ginsberg, 1988).

According to Wimpelberg and Ginsberg (1988), the overall impact of national commissions on reform in schools written prior to 1983 appeared to be small, because the expected changes rarely reached the classroom. While a number of explanations were advanced for this shortcoming,

including the concept of loosely-coupled educational organizations, "the most common conclusion of all, however, is that commission reports simply get ignored--put on the shelf" (Wimpelberg & Ginsberg, 1988, p. 15). This conclusion suggested that schools possessed "well-developed mechanisms to buffer" (Murphy & Beck, 1994, p. 12) the outside pressures from society. Furthermore, detailed plans for implementation of the reforms were rarely included in the commission process. Despite the limited impact of national commissions and resistance of schools to change, however, such reports remained a popular mechanism for studying educational problems.

Increasingly, the current shifts in national commission reports moved away from sponsorship by professional educational organizations and toward membership from non-educational interest groups. "While. . .the membership of the commission panels is now much more inclusive of business, political, and non-educational academic interests than ever before, the popularity and frequency of the commission approach has not waned" (Wimpelberg & Ginsberg, 1988, p. 14). The focal points of reform efforts in recent decades were characterized by several distinct trends, and emerged from powerful external forces rather than sources of change which resided inside schools.

During the 1960s, a national movement originated which called for educational organizations to meet the diverse demands of a multitude of interest groups (Hanson, 1985). "As the structure of modern American society grew more and more flexible, more complex, more urban, and more pluralistic, the stresses on all levels of education increased" (George et al., 1992, p. 5). Though education was a priority in financial terms during the 1960s, the demands for organizational attention to multi-faceted community interests limited the mobilization of innovation in any specific area, even

causing system "paralysis" (Hanson, 1985, p. 43). "Frequently the demands for attention to specific interests . . . clashed dramatically with competing demands" (Hanson, 1985, p. 42).

During this period, an antidote for the paralysis of action was addressed by attempts at planned organizational change. Government sponsored initiatives supported the development and implementation of new innovations in organization, management and instruction (Hanson, 1985). These initiatives employed the use of pre-packaged systems of instructional delivery, which focused upon explicitly stated behavioral objectives. The emphasis was on planning or managing the diffusion efforts from outside the organization (Owens, 1991).

The focus of the 1970s differed, however. Because public financial resources were more limited than during the previous decade, changes advanced during this period often emphasized financial conservatism and accountability (Hanson, 1985). With a new push for measuring progress, standards were established for evaluating students, teachers, administrators and schools. Comparisons were then made within each group as to their progress. In fact, this era became an extension of the scientific management emphasis of the early 1900s, in which attempts were made to measure the outputs or products of a school as compared to its inputs or resources.

In the early 1980s, the push for meeting standards developed into a continual comparison between American schools and those of other nations (Hanson, 1985). The response to the publication of several national reports was a call in the first half of the 1980s for more centralized, bureaucratic regulations for education. These included a focus on standardization of

graduation and certification requirements (Firestone, Fuhrman, & Kirst, 1990).

National Reform Since 1983

From 1983 until the present, educational reform efforts have been heralded by "high-profile" (Ginsberg & Plank, 1995, p. 8) reform reports. On April 26, 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education released their report entitled, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. This report "was the most prominent of a stream of reports released in the mid-1980s that catalyzed the first wave of the reform movement" (Ginsberg & Plank, 1995, p. 7). Following its publication, educational reform has experienced a period of "remarkable longevity" (Ginsberg & Plank, 1995, p. 9).

A new movement for educational reform followed immediately after the release of A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. The emphasis on measuring educational outcomes, begun the decade before, led to specific comparisons of the American education system with that of other industrial nations. "The Commission's report forced the American public to do more than simply demand additional accountability from educators and blame them for all the problems in our schools" (Hanson, 1985, p. 45).

However, the first response to this report was an initial increase in state regulatory mandates that "facilitated the reach of governmental bureaucracies directly into the classroom--a reach that was mimicked at the local level by many school district central office organizations" (Owens, 1991, p. 34). In such state reforms, "legislators and governors, with the powerful support of business groups, played leading roles" (Fuhrman, Clune & Elmore, 1988/1991, p. 207); the interests supported by education were

expected to adjust to, not shape, the reforms. This emphasis on centralizing educational decision making at higher bureaucratic levels led to the emergence of a new set of concerns and reactions.

During the late 1980s, the national reports responded to the rigidity of the bureaucratic impositions and recommended the increased professionalization of school staffs (Bjork, 1995). This shift of focus in the national reform movement was characterized by an emphasis on the individual school as a unit for solving educational problems, with a resulting focus on individual teachers as professionals with autonomy to make necessary decisions and on holding them accountable for achieving stated outcomes. The goal was for teachers to collaborate and become more fully engaged in the process for improving each educational organization (Owens, 1991).

Middle School Movement

The National Movement Toward Middle Schools

Schools for students in the middle grades have been in transition, affected by the pressures of society and the demands for reform, for more than a century. "The middle level movement, which now includes junior high school folks as well as middle school folks, has gone on to become the longest running, most extensive educational reform effort in the United States" (Georgia Board of Education, 1993, p. 33). In 1893, the tension between elementary and secondary styles of instruction was noted. Years after its emergence in the early 1900s, the junior high was labeled a "hybrid institution, a school with an identity crisis as severe as the identity crisis endured by many of the young students within it" (George et al., 1992, p. 5).

It appears that in most states and many school districts the junior high school began to take on the characteristics and components of the high school to which a few select students would be sent. This choice was made over the option of focusing on the appropriate education for all young adolescents. (George et al., 1992, p. 4)

By the 1960s, the call for junior high school reform became "increasingly urgent" (George et al., 1992, p. 5). For example, at a Junior High Conference at Cornell University in 1963, "Alexander presented an interpretation of the need for and characteristics of a new school in the middle . . . , stressing certain contributions the junior high had made, and enumerating other characteristics to be sought in the new middle school" (George & Alexander, 1993, p. 27). Though the junior high school was slowly replaced by a new name, that of middle school, the old goal of meeting the needs of young adolescent students remained.

However, the reality of putting this concept into practice continued to elude educators.

Both the history and the current status of middle level education in America are the result of a type of dynamic tension, a struggle between a philosophical commitment to improving programs for young adolescents, on the one hand, and the demands of expediency on the other. (George et al., 1992, p. 2)

Due to public demand for structural changes and solutions, middle schools were opened as a tool for desegregation, for addressing changing demographics and exploding enrollments, and for meeting state funding

criteria (George & Alexander, 1993). Middle schools, like other aspects of education in the 1960s, were subjected to diverse environmental pressures.

As middle schools continued emerging nationally between 1965 and 1975, they were influenced by conflicting demands. During the 1960s the needs of the community eclipsed other considerations, while the focus upon financial accountability became a prominent influence during the 1970s. Although these pressures influenced the growth of middle schools, they hindered the fulfillment of the middle school concept. The latter involved the idea that the school should meet the needs of the students. "Many, indeed, a majority, of the first middle schools may have been opened for reasons having very little to do, directly, with the characteristics and needs of young adolescents" (George et al., 1992, p. 7).

Specifically, a requirement to achieve desegregation in an era of financial constraint and accountability required adaptation of existing schools. This federal mandate had to be accomplished on a budget (George et al., 1992). Implementation of a middle school for grades six through eight became an economically feasible strategy for facilitating demands for district desegregation (George & Alexander, 1993). Those trying to satisfy a need for physical space capitalized on a growing educational concern for the welfare of young adolescents. School districts in the South were particularly responsive to the need to cheaply satisfy desegregation requirements through reconfiguration.

Similarly, demographic patterns heavily influenced decisions regarding middle schools in the Midwest and Northeast. The changing demographic patterns forced high schools to be closed and new elementary schools to be built. "At some point in the process . . . astute central office planners must

have discovered that the implementation of middle schools might solve the problems brought by closing high schools" (George et al., 1992, p. 8).

The positive side of the problem was that schools found that they "could be conservative in terms of school district capital outlay and innovative (via the new middle school program) at the same time" (George et al., 1992, p. 30). The bottom line was that between 1967 and 1987 the growth of schools with "at least three grades and not more than five and including grades 6 and 7" (George & Alexander, 1993, p. 29) was staggering. The number of such schools increased 500 percent in this twenty-year period. However, the negative aspect was that, though demographic fluctuations and racial desegregation were catalysts for the middle school movement, many schools "became middle schools only in name and grade level" (George et al., 1992, p. 8). "Changes made had been restricted largely to the names of the schools and the grades they contained" (Lounsbury, 1991). A greater emphasis upon the needs of the young adolescent students was not always the result.

As the 1980s brought an increase in regulations for schools in general, the middle school movement felt both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, specific certification for teachers at the middle grades level became more expected and more acceptable. For example in 1978, before the regulations were in place, only 30 percent of all states offered a specific certification process for teachers of early adolescents; most teachers of young adolescents held elementary or secondary certification (McEwin & Allen, 1985). By 1981, only 41 percent of the principals surveyed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals indicated that their teachers had "no specific training for the middle level" (McEwin & Alexander, 1987, p. 2). However, of the teachers that did have

this training, only 44 percent reported that it was provided through appropriate university coursework. Two years later, by 1983, half of the states had adopted college or university middle school certification for teachers through the types of regulatory measures found during this wave of reform.

In addition, these reforms meant that regulated expectations for the ninth grade became more restrictive; a typical result was a permanent move of this grade from the middle school or junior high to the high school (George & Alexander, 1993). Though this was achieved because of regulatory reasons and was related to either numbers of students or subject preparation for high schools, the result was a closer match with the suggestions of middle school advocates that schools for young adolescents house only grades six through eight. However, despite the positive effects of the national reform movement on middle school configuration and certification, the major middle school tenet continued to be generally overlooked. This concept required that each middle school be designed to meet the unique needs of its students.

Four National Middle School Studies

From 1988 to 1990, four national studies focused on the middle school movement and the unaddressed needs and characteristics of middle school students (Epstein & Mac Iver, 1990; George et al., 1992). Three were surveys, the first by Cawalti in 1988, another by Alexander and McEwin in 1989, and the third by the Effective Middle Grades Program in 1990 (Epstein & Mac Iver, 1990; George et al., 1992). Finally, the fourth was a task force report, Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century, published by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development in

1989. Each of these called for attention to be placed on the needs of the young adolescent:

Most American junior high and middle schools do not meet the developmental needs of young adolescents. These institutions have the potential to make a tremendous impact on the development of their students--for better or worse--yet they have been largely ignored in the recent surge of educational reform. (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989, pp. 12-13)

"It is rare, indeed, that four major, carefully conducted, national studies focus simultaneously on a similar concern . . . ; it is as comforting as it is rare to learn how much support each study lends to the others" (George et al., 1992, p. 13). The result was to re-focus attention, not on the structural changes needed in middle schools, but on the middle school concept that emphasized the need for each school to meet the unique needs of its students.

The mid-1980s trend toward emphasis on the individual school and its teachers as solvers of problems was heralded by writings such as that found in a *Middle School Journal* column by Lounsbury in 1986:

The reform movement has already led to specific actions in nearly every state and school district in the land. But it is not possible to legislate or mandate school improvement. . . . Policies are, at best, only preliminaries to the real educational event, the interaction of students and a teacher in a classroom. Such actions and policies are often very necessary steps, essential beginning points for reform, but they are never, in

themselves, the precursors of change that they are commonly thought to be. (Lounsbury, 1991, p. 17)

The Southern Emphasis on Middle Schools

In the South, the middle school movement was traced through periodic documentation of the certification process for middle school teachers. One survey indicates that by 1985 the southern states, with the exception of Mississippi and Tennessee, provided teachers the opportunity to obtain certification in middle level instruction (McEwin & Allen, 1985). Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia had mandatory certification; however, almost every state had a different configuration of applicable grade levels. In addition, Florida offered advanced middle level certification for specialist teachers, and Virginia offered this certificate for counselors and principals (McEwin & Allen, 1985).

The Middle School Movement in Georgia

During the 1970s, interest in the middle school movement led to the creation of two organizations in Georgia, the Georgia Association of Middle School Principals and a Georgia League of Middle Schools (Georgia Board of Education, 1993). The latter is now called the Georgia Association of Middle Schools. In 1975, the National Middle School Association conference was held in Atlanta. It was the first time this conference had been moved outside the midwest.

As early as 1985, public schools in Georgia were encouraged to move toward use of the middle school concept through the state push for Quality Basic Education (QBE) mandates (Gilmer, 1986). According to Gilmer (1986), the state's policy mentioned criteria for "organizational patterns of the school, interdisciplinary teams, planning time for the team, exploratory courses, areas of study and teacher qualifications" (p. 9).

In 1987, Georgia and three other states were given a special notation in a middle level certification survey report (McEwin & Alexander, 1987). The survey pointed out that during both 1983 and 1987, these four states reported having ten or more programs for middle level education among institutions of higher learning. In the 1987 survey, thirteen Georgia institutions responded, and all of these possessed preparation programs for educators in grades four through eight (McEwin & Alexander, 1987). Of the middle school movement in Georgia, "perhaps the most significant occurrence advancing middle level education was the finally successful effort to establish separate and distinctive certification for the middle grades" (Georgia Board of Education, 1993, p. 34). By 1992, of the 33 Georgia colleges and universities, 9 were approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and middle grades teacher education programs at the Bachelor's, Master's, and Educational Specialist's levels (Georgia Board of Education, 1993). One of these also had a middle grades Doctorate program for teachers.

In 1990 the State Board of Education in Georgia formally adopted a set of criteria for the middle school programs in the public schools. Those meeting the criteria and the grade level configuration of either sixth, seventh, and eighth or seventh and eighth could apply for an incentive grant funded by the state (Georgia Board of Education, 1990). The criteria outlined the requirements for every aspect of the middle school program from the length and use of planning time to the number of exploratory courses students should complete. The minimal staff certification guidelines were also included (Georgia Board of Education, 1990).

Therefore, by 1990 Georgia's public schools had access to both teacher certification programs at the college or university level and financial

incentives from the state that emphasized adoption of the middle school concept. However, a 1990 survey conducted statewide found a gap between the characteristics of the responding middle level schools and the tenets of the middle school concept (Allen & Sheppard, 1991). Most of the schools reported that their system level administration or their principal determined the grade organization of the schools. In fact, "the lack of consensus on how the grades should be combined into school units has long been characteristic of our public schools in Georgia" (Georgia Board of Education, 1993, p. 35). During the school year 1991-1992, the state's schools included 53 different combinations of grades, kindergarten through twelfth (Georgia Board of Education, 1993). Most of the middle level schools responding to the 1990 survey still included grades four and five (Allen & Sheppard, 1991).

In addition, few schools responding to the 1990 survey reported having a year or more of full-time faculty study or planning prior to transition toward the middle school program (Allen & Sheppard, 1991). The primary activities used to prepare were visitations to schools with similar operational plans and inservice meetings between prospective faculty and middle level consultants. Only three schools of the 129 responding indicated that they engaged in any specific training of team leaders or principals, or provided any type of community orientation.

It is interesting to note the surprisingly large number of educators who appear to enjoy college or university training in middle grades education and the number of middle grades schools in the study that do not reflect important middle school characteristics. (Allen & Sheppard, 1991, p. 13)

Allen and Sheppard (1991) commented specifically that the faculty inside schools needed to commit to the middle school concept before a successful transition could be made.

Traditional Roles of Teachers and Administrators

In their description of the social realities of teaching, Lieberman and Miller (1984) described the nature of teaching as a profession with its own set of "social system understandings" (Lieberman & Miller, 1984, p. 1). The generalizations they derived pointed out that teaching style was personalized, though the mission of teachers was both cognitively-related to all children and affectively-related to individual children. Similarly, in her study of 78 Tennessee public schools, Rosenholtz (1989) explained that "the question of what teaching is, how it is performed, and how it is changed cannot be divorced from the social organization in which it occurs" (p. 205). Furthermore, "we are just beginning to understand how schools' social organization can be altered in ways to make teaching a more professional activity" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 206).

The traditional lack of input opportunities for teachers in examined schools seemed to create a professional requirement for "teachers to demonstrate their capacities for accommodationism" (Romanish, 1993, p. 4). Neufeld and McGowan (1993) pointed out that "teachers are often placed at the end of the educational assembly line" (p. 249). While teachers were the ones delivering instruction to students on a daily basis, "they are often given little or no voice in determining the official curriculum to be realized in classrooms" (Neufeld & McGowan, 1993, p. 249). Romanish (1993) concurred by saying of teachers that "the absence of a voice means they lack the professional right to reject a program, or suspend it once its undesirable features become evident; their only option is to

oblige" (p. 4). Few opportunities traditionally existed for teachers to impact the curriculum guides, number of grades required, and sometimes the amount of time spent on each subject (Neufeld & McGowan, 1993). The cultural norms in these schools reflected a traditional lack of input from teachers.

Teacher improvement and on-going learning in schools was examined by Rosenholtz (1989); most of the schools in her study were eventually labeled as "learning-impoverished" (p. 80). In these schools, teachers defined teaching as "arriving at a fixed destination through the vehicle of experience" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 82). Teaching skills were "at once predetermined and inflexible: if teachers become familiar with textbooks and curriculum, paperwork, and other routine operating procedures, they seem to have learned their craft" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 82).

Typically, a teacher's satisfaction is related to student feedback (Lieberman & Miller, 1984). "In fact, most of the time the students are the only source of rewards for most teachers. Isolated in their own classrooms, teachers receive feedback for their efforts from the words, expressions, behaviors, and suggestions of the students" (Lieberman & Miller, 1984, p. 2). In many of the schools studied by Rosenholtz (1989), the self-reliance of teachers was a "moral imperative" (p. 207) and collaboration was low priority.

The traditional roles of teachers in most schools studied were related to the amount of goal sharing within them. "Low consensus schools" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 38) were those in which "few teachers seemed attached to anything or anybody, and seemed more concerned with their own identity than a sense of shared community" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 207). "Although there is much talk of late about goal specificity and

accountability, it is still the case that the goals of education are vague and often in conflict" (Lieberman & Miller, 1984, p. 3). Similarly, the goals of student learning in most elementary schools were called an abstraction by Rosenholtz (1989), who added that "their application in classrooms is very much subject to teachers' discretion" (p. 16). "The result is that individual teachers make their own translations of policy and that, in general, the profession is riddled by vagueness and conflict" (Lieberman & Miller, 1984, p. 3).

The role of principals in "low consensus schools" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 38), was one of isolation as well. Their concerns were of "their own self-esteem" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 207) and, having uncertainty of their own technical skills, principals taught teachers the "unassailable lesson that they must shoulder classroom burdens by themselves" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 207). However, the approaches of such principals were often "near-perfect mirrors" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 211) for the way they were treated by "stuck superintendents" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 178).

Lieberman and Miller (1984) saw similarities between "principaling" (p. 70) and teaching, in that they were both reflective of personal style, full of conflict, and marked by uncertainty. Both were perceived as learned through experience. However, the role of principal was different in that its expectations were unique. Lieberman and Miller (1984) listed the various roles as follows:

omniscient overseer, confidant and keeper of secrets, sifter and sorter of knowledge, pace-setter and routinizer, referee, linker and broker, translator and transformer, paper pusher, accountant, clerk, plant manager, disciplinarian, scapegoat, educational leader, and moral authority. (pp. 71-76)

According to studies by Lieberman and Miller (1984), the interpersonal relationships between teachers in the school and between teachers and the principal were strongly representative of the roles of everyone in the school:

Perhaps the most ignored area of observations about schools is the one most obvious to teachers--the interpersonal relations in the building. These relations are difficult to capture because they are so ubiquitous, but they may be the most important determinants to teachers' feelings about self, about work, about peers, and most definitely about the principal. (p. 27)

Interpersonal relationships between the faculty and the principal were also crucial to the tone set within the school:

Teachers all claim that once people leave the classroom, they lose the dailiness and closed-in feeling of teaching as well as their sensitivity to classroom realities. So, too, with many principals whose own demands on their time often distance them from teachers. (Lieberman & Miller, 1984, p. 29)

Similarly, in "low consensus schools" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 38), teachers' roles were confined by their lack of opportunity to talk, either socially to build bonds or professionally to discuss learning. "When teachers conversed in either moderate or low consensus schools, they stressed students' failings instead of their triumphs perhaps to avenge themselves of the daylong strain imposed upon them" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 39). In fact, teacher leadership had its own defined, but related role. "Teacher leaders were those who remained politically unassuaged, active in their union, or those who could empathize with colleagues' myriad problems" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 207).

Furthermore, teachers in "learning-impooverished" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 80) schools viewed the task of assisting struggling colleagues as one relegated to the principal. "Almost all acknowledge their principal's awareness of the 'problem,' and, by their accounts, principals do remarkably little to remedy it (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 92). Teachers, themselves, did not view their own role as one of assisting colleagues. Yet, "teachers possess the major portion of available knowledge about teaching and learning, and that it is only through a recognition of that knowledge and an articulation and understanding of it that we can begin to find ways to improve schools" (Lieberman & Miller, 1984, p. xi).

Organizational Change Theory

Introduction

Organizational change research has typically focused on institutions such as those of business, military, and government (Owens, 1991). Focus on change in educational organizations has been a relatively recent development, one that has been pushed to the forefront as the press for school reform has been advanced and the distinct characteristics of educational organizations have become better understood.

Within educational organizations, change processes are not well understood. Though schools as educational organizations have some aspects in common with other organizations, initial studies indicate that the differences are significant, particularly in the expectations placed upon schools (Owens, 1991). Educational organizations typically carry the expectation from society for preserving and transmitting culture and for teaching the society's traditional values (Owens, 1991). Yet, they are also expected to improve and change society through the instruction of students. Thus, schools and school systems, "caught in a shooting gallery of

conflicting expectations and demands" (Hanson, 1985, p. 283), are expected to both remain the same and to become a force for social change.

External Factors and Roles Leading to Change

Early studies of change in educational organizations assumed that changes could be planned and implemented from the top down. Explanations relied upon either empirical-rational or power-coercive strategies (Owens, 1991). The former used improved communication to disseminate innovations developed by researchers down to practitioners in the field. Innovations were defined by Owens (1991) as planned change efforts designed to help schools achieve old or new goals more effectively, and by Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall (1987) as a general term for a "program, process, or practice--new or not--that is new to a person" (p. 3). "The concept is that good ideas are developed outside the school and are, ultimately, installed in the school" (Owens, p. 217).

Through this empirical-rational concept, schools were on the receiving end of changes that were imposed upon them from outside, via pressure and expectations from state and district administration. In addition, changes could be forced from the outside through power-coercive strategies; state or federal powers could use political, financial, or moral sanctions to obtain compliance from schools (Owens, 1991). "Implicit in these strategies is the notion that organizations--when left to their own devices--generally emphasize stability over change and generally are resistant to change; they therefore must be made to change" (Owens, p. 219) from the outside and from the top down.

However, top-down changes forced from the outside onto schools and into classrooms were not completely successful (Hord et al., 1987; Owens, 1991; Sarason, 1990). "Innovations involved with instructional

strategies and curriculums have usually failed" (Hord et al., 1987, p. i). Sarason (1990) pointed to the efforts of educational policy makers in legislating such innovations as new math in the 1960s and 1970s, efforts of reformers whose "grasp of life in the classroom was, to put it charitably, unknowledgeable" (p. 91).

Paradigms and Paradigm Shifts

Though not specifically based on research completed in schools, one way of examining the change process in organizations was through understanding paradigms. As Barker (1992) discussed the value of concepts such as "paradigm shifts" (p. 37), "paradigm shifters" (p. 54), and "paradigm pioneers" (p. 71) for business organizations, he utilized the scientific writings of Kuhn (1970). Foster (1986) also drew upon the writings of Kuhn (1970) as he described the importance of paradigms in understanding educational administration theory.

Specifically, Kuhn (1970) wrote of scientific revolutions, as he described the concept of paradigm; "the resulting transition to a new paradigm is scientific revolution" (p. 90). He implied that paradigms were the scientists' "incommensurable ways of seeing the world and of practicing science in it" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 4). Foster (1986) further explained and paraphrased Kuhn (1970) by saying that "science is governed by paradigms or frameworks and ways of seeing" (p. 54). Also writing of science and relying heavily on Kuhn (1970), Margolis (1993) explained paradigms as "habits of mind" (p. 2) or "patterns" (p. 2).

Kuhn (1970) wrote of the achievements of various scientific fields, calling these the "foundation" (p. 10) for "further practice" (p. 10) and "the body of accepted theory" (p. 10). These paradigms, which "served for a time implicitly to define the legitimate problems and methods of a research

field for succeeding generations of practitioners," (Kuhn, 1970, p. 10) had two characteristics in common:

Their achievement was sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity. Simultaneously, it was sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve. (p. 10)

Barker (1992) explained how change occurred by further examining the concept of paradigm; his perspective was from that of business and management. Barker's (1992) definition of paradigm was as follows:

A paradigm is a set of rules and regulations (written or unwritten) that does two things: (1) it establishes or defines boundaries; and (2) it tells you how to behave inside the boundaries in order to be successful. (p. 32)

Furthermore, a "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) was a change from one set of boundaries and its rules to another. Barker (1992) offered that such shifts occurred because each paradigm solved a specific set of problems from the last paradigm, but created or left unsolved, another set of problems. Fullan (1993) explained that problems were "inevitable and you can't learn without them" (p. 21); they were necessary for learning and changing. Barker (1992) concurred by adding that "paradigm shifts" (p. 37) took place because the old paradigm both solved a set of problems and created a new set. In seeking solutions to the new set of problems, the shift toward another set of rules, solutions, and its set of problems was facilitated. Fullan (1993) cautioned that people inside the organization must continually seek and be receptive to solutions for changes to occur. Fullan (1993) called this "inquiry" (p. 15), the second capacity of change agency.

Furthermore, while writing in the field of science, Kuhn (1970) explained the shifts, or scientific revolutions, in the following manner:

Each of them necessitated the community's rejection of one time-honored scientific theory in favor of another incompatible with it. Each produced a consequent shift in the problems available for scientific scrutiny and in the standards by which the profession determined what should count as an admissible problem or as a legitimate problem-solution. (p. 6)

Accordingly, a paradigm was a way of looking at the world, a perspective. Change, therefore, necessitated discovering a new way of looking, a new perspective, or making a "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37). Kuhn (1970) called this a "shift of vision" (p. 116) from one scientific way of thinking to another. Margolis (1993) explained that "when we talk about a Kuhnian paradigm shift, what we are essentially talking about is a special sort of shift of habits of mind" (p. 2). Each new paradigm in a field offered a fresh perspective on the problems of the last paradigm; it only awaited acceptance. However, Kuhn (1970) asserted that shifting from one paradigm to another was immensely difficult for individuals and for the field.

Barker (1992) called this difficulty the "paradigm effect" (p. 86). Accordingly, one would be blinded by the existing paradigm, to the extent that the new paradigm would not be visible. "What may be perfectly visible, perfectly obvious, to persons with one paradigm, may be quite literally, invisible to persons with a different paradigm" (Barker, 1992, p. 86). Discovery and acceptance of a new paradigm, as asserted by Barker (1992), was more complex than simply wanting to see the new one or knowing in which direction to look for it.

Therefore, resistance to change was not merely the opposite of acceptance of change. Fullan (1993) concurred that "you can't mandate what matters" (p. 22); he added that "when complex change is involved, people do not and cannot change by being told to do so" (Fullan, 1993, p. 24). To have accepted a new paradigm, one must have been able to perceive from a new point of view; one must have shifted from one perspective to another. "What we actually perceive is dramatically determined by our paradigms" (Barker, 1992, p. 86).

Paradigm Shifters from Outside Organizations

According to Barker (1992), people who tipped the balance of the current paradigm toward the solution of its own problems and, therefore the next paradigm, were "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54). Kuhn (1970) offered two categories of people who brought change to organizations; Barker (1992) reiterated these and added two additional categories.

The final category of "paradigm shifter" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) was that of the person who ran into an unsolvable problem that was in the way of progress. This "tinkerer" (Barker, 1992, p. 64) then set out to solve it because it was his or her problem, not because of the paradigm in which it was contained. Without realizing that he or she was creating a solution to much more widespread problems, this individual sometimes succeeded in solving his or her problem. This solution led to changes in whole paradigms in other or related fields.

Though Barker (1992) stated that the "paradigm shifter" (p. 54) was usually "an outsider" (p. 55), he seemed to be referring to someone who was not indoctrinated by the prevailing paradigm. Typically the "outsider" (Barker, 1992, p. 55) was "someone who really doesn't understand the

prevailing paradigm in all its subtleties (sometimes they don't understand it at all!)" (Barker, 1992, p. 55). In three of the four categories, the shifter was someone inside the organization; while this fourth category represented people with little or no knowledge of, and no power to influence, the organization. In fact, Barker (1992) said these individuals rarely had any credibility inside the organization because they were "outsiders" (p. 55).

Barker (1992) explained that the response of those inside the organization to those from outside who did not know the existing paradigm was often harsh. Typically the organization's insiders "put them in their place" (Barker, 1992, p. 56) with phrases designed to rebuff the new ideas of the "outsiders" (Barker, 1992, p. 55): "Who do they think they are? . . . We don't do things that way around here. . . . When you've been around a little longer, you'll understand" (Barker, 1992, p. 56). Those inside did not yet recognize that the proposed changes would address some of the problems they themselves were currently experiencing. Thus, according to Barker (1992), the "outsiders" (p. 55) were rarely listened to by those inside the organization, and the shift toward the new paradigm, with its potential for solving the problems of the current one, seldom actually occurred.

University Influence upon Public Schools

According to Hamman (1992), the literature provided an incomplete view of the relationships formed between public schools and "external expert assistance" (p. 2). Barth (1990) added, however, that more research was not necessary to "identify many of the difficulties universities encounter when interacting with schools" (p. 103). He wrote from the perspective of one who was spending his career "at the intersection of school and university, rooted in one while making occasional forays into the other" (Barth, 1990, p. 103).

Barth (1990) described the university and public schools as having poor relations and distinctly different cultures. The difficulties of "crossing boundaries" (Barth, 1990, p. 106) were made harder by the various roadblocks, including the prescriptive turn Barth (1990) explained that most initiatives from the university toward the public schools usually took.

It seems to many in the university that schoolpeople want to improve things without changing them very much; from the point of view of schoolpeople, university folks offer to change things but without improving them very much. These are hardly promising conditions for a marriage. (Barth, 1990, p. 104)

Instead, Barth (1990) advocated conversation and dialogue between schools and universities. "To be helpful, universities must engage in conversation with the people who live under the roof of the schoolhouse about the work that goes on there" (Barth, 1990, p. 106). He added that universities and schools would benefit from the development of "agencies that can mediate between the cultures of school and university" (Barth, 1990, pp. 110-111).

Dialogue was possible, however, as noted in an examination of one study of a mentor relationship between an elementary school principal and a university researcher. Hamman (1992) detailed the benefits of forming such relationships for the public school and its change processes. The mentor provided both an emotional outlet for the principal, as she attempted to work through changes with her faculty, and a resource for practical strategies. The staff members benefited from this close working relationship as they proceeded to develop "a more positive, cooperative school climate which both teachers and administrators have observed" (Hamman, 1992, p. 23).

Similarly, in their discussion of a professional development school, Neufeld and McGowan (1993) explained the close working relationship of some teachers with university personnel. The arrangements between the two educational institutions provided for joint completion of projects, instruction in workshops, discussion of educational topics, completion of action research, and presentations at conferences.

Karr et al. (1994) offered a description of one urban public school's relationship with a nearby university. They explained that a two-year effort to establish a "university/school partnership had set the climate for a university professor to be part of the middle school initiative" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 6). After teachers sought help with a grant application, the principal asked a university team to meet with teachers to "brainstorm" (Karr et al., 1994, pp. 6) possibilities. The authors added that those at the school level "linked with" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 3) those at the university; "rapport, trust, and a bridge had come into play in this project" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7).

In this study, Karr et al. (1994) described the mutual benefits of this situation for both school and university. They explained that "university professors, concerned that their teacher education students become familiar with the process of school change and teacher development as a model for their own career growth, feel that students have had unusually productive experiences in" this school (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7).

Barth (1990) noted the importance of this type of mutual benefit for public schools and universities. In particular, he called one of the roadblocks to university/public school collaboration the "muted voices" of the school personnel. He explained that "it is tragic" (Barth, 1990, p. 105) that those at the school level did not speak up and share their wealth of

knowledge about the craft of teaching. Such input would be of value to the discussion of school improvement in the literature. He added that writing and sharing through university encouragement could bolster the voice of school personnel, thus filling a gap by furnishing "insight that only an 'insider' can provide" (Barth, 1990, p. 113). "Until dialogue replaces monologues, conversations between university and schoolpeople will have all of the resonance of one hand clapping" (Barth, 1990, p. 106).

Internal Factors and Roles Leading to Change

Recent research indicated that top-down change strategies did not always lead to effective, long-term, and substantive changes (Fullan, 1994; Sarason, 1990). Therefore, reformers began focusing on normative-reeducative strategies that relied on high levels of involvement from school personnel (Owens, 1991). Research that supported this change perspective explored the concept of wide-scale involvement of key individuals (McLaughlin, 1987/1991) and transformational leadership (Hallinger, 1992; Murphy & Beck, 1994). It examined the relationship between parents, teachers, and administrators and their collective role in changing educational organizations (Smith & Scott, 1990).

Organization development was an example of a normative-reeducative strategy (Owens, 1991). Schmuck and Runkel (1985) explained that organization development was a process by which change in schools was systematically planned and arrangements were made for continual effort. It began with organizational self-study, and focused on altering the social system. Organization development recognized and worked with the relationships of the people in the organization, individually and in groups. The goal was to improve education through maximizing organizational functioning. "Deliberate efforts at school improvement usually affect not

only the principal and faculty as individuals, but also relationships between the principal and faculty and their collective relationships with students and parents" (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985, p. 1).

The specific strategies emphasized the ability of the group to change the norms of their collective attitudes and values toward productive, collaborative norms (Owens, 1991). In addition, an emphasis on organization self-renewal declared that effective change could not be imposed upon schools from outside; the culture of the school must have changed first to support the view that much of the need and ability to make changes must have originated from within the school (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985). The goal of self-renewal was to build the capacity of individuals who inhabited schools for continuous problem solving (Owens, 1991).

While organization development typically used outside consultants to train system personnel in the techniques needed to change the norms, Schmuck and Runkel (1985) outlined several advantages to using consultants from inside the system. They also recognized that people were

more likely to carry out the actions called for by a decision when they understand the implications of the decision. . . . It is one of the reasons that OD facilitators advise that decision making occur low in the hierarchy, at the level of those who will do the work called for by the decision. (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985, p. 8)

However, the use of internal consultants was addressed in a limited fashion.

Attitudes

"Altering structures without a corresponding change in attitudes will affect behavior only minimally; attitudes that change without accompanying structural change are quickly squelched by the system" (Baldrige & Deal,

1983, p. 212). Barker (1992) called this "paradigm paralysis" (p. 155) and said that success with one paradigm tended to make the organization adopt it as the only possible paradigm, or way of seeing and doing things.

So, until we can change that attitude and stimulate people to be more flexible and break out of their paradigms to search for alternatives, we will continue to find the great new ideas, on the whole, being discovered outside the prevailing institutions.

(Barker, 1992, p. 156)

He called the opposite of this stagnating attitude "paradigm pliancy" (Barker, 1992, p. 156) and added that "the cultivation of an open attitude will pay off for you in the long run" (p. 157).

Similarly, Sarason (1990) asserted that schools were like other intricate institutions in that they typically accommodated without requiring real change. This occurred because "the strength of the status quo--its underlying axioms, its pattern of power relationships, its sense of tradition and therefore what seems right, natural, and proper--almost automatically rules out options for changes in that status quo" (Sarason, 1990, p. 35).

Culture and Climate

Baldrige and Deal (1983) wrote of professionals seeking political support for change. "Changes must be politically feasible, that is, they must be organized and implemented so that political support can be marshaled and professional leadership can be harnessed to help promote the changes" (Baldrige & Deal, 1983, p. 212).

Sarason (1990) made a related case by saying that the power relationships inherent to schools must be changed for the improvement of schools. "Change will not occur unless there is an alteration of power relationships among those in the system and within the classroom"

(Sarason, 1990, p. xiv). Sarason (1990) defended the lack of reform in schools by acknowledging the difficulty of understanding the system in which these relationships existed, of even knowing where to start in trying to change them. "What is crucial is to decide which of these problems should be a starting point, because if one deals successfully, even in part, with that problem, changes elsewhere in the system are likely to occur over time" (Sarason, 1990, p. 27).

Sarason (1990) allowed that neither those inside the system of education nor those outside of it were in an advantageous position for understanding the complexity of the system. He explained that this was one of the problems for creating change, specifically in the power relationships within the system, adding that "those outside the system with responsibility for articulating a program for reform have nothing resembling a holistic conception of the system they seek to influence" (Sarason, 1990, p. 26). In addition, those inside the system did not necessarily understand it in the holistic sense either, although Barker (1992) added that those inside were typically indoctrinated by the organization.

Yet, Sarason (1990) wrote that just altering the power relationships was "not a sufficient condition for obtaining desired changes" (p. xiv). This was how he explained why giving teachers more decision-making power in schools was not enough to create needed changes. Rather, Sarason (1990) asserted that two basic assumptions about schools must also be dealt with for change to occur:

The first is the assumption that schools exist primarily for the growth and development of children. That assumption is invalid because teachers cannot create and sustain the conditions for the productive development of children if those

conditions do not exist for teachers. The second issue is that there is now an almost unbridgeable gulf that students perceive between the world of the school and the world outside of it. Schools are uninteresting places in which the interests and questions of children have no relevance to what they are required to learn in the classroom. Teachers continue to teach subject matter, not children. (p. xiv)

Thus, change processes and the needs of everyone inside schools, adults and children, must be addressed together.

Empowerment in Schools

"The first thing to be acknowledged in the school reform crusade of the past decade is that it has been, from the very beginning, a non-teacher driven phenomenon" (Romanish, 1993, p. 2). However, recent issues of empowerment and participatory decision making were becoming basic to the push for school restructuring and change (Baldwin, Burns, Moffett, and Head, 1995). "Teacher groups are encouraging more decision making by teachers, administrators are promoting site-based management, and the general public seems to be more willing to accept school decentralization" (Baldwin et al., 1995, pp. 145-146). School improvement efforts may have been facilitated by the recent emphasis on school empowerment (Richardson, Lane, & Flanigan, 1995).

While it had different meanings, empowerment was defined by some as "a process or philosophy to improve education by increasing the autonomy of teachers, principals, and staff to make school-site decisions" (Richardson et al., 1995, p. xxiv). In this process, the decision-making power was "shared by all who have an interest in the decision" (Richardson et al., 1995, p. xxiv). Empowerment was described as "almost a life-giving

force" (Simpson, 1990, p. 36), with "validation, affirmation, vindication, and self-actualization rolled into one" (p. 36). In her synthesis of readings on empowerment, Restine (1995) stated:

It seems to me that *empowerment* is synonymous to *enabling*, with one distinct difference. That is, the root word in empowerment is power, and the concept of power is most often affixed to positions of authority, is in some way official, and is viewed as a commodity. Enabling broadens the concept of empowerment through providing opportunity, making things possible, and enlarging capacity, coupled with sharing power, authority, and responsibility. (p. xi)

Richardson et al. (1995) pointed out that "the terms *teacher empowerment*, *site-based management*, *participatory management*, *decentralization*, *shared decision making*, and *school-based management* are all included under the general rubric of empowerment" (p. xxv).

A goal of empowerment was to change schools by giving the school level personnel the authority, flexibility, and resources necessary to solve their schools' particular problems and implement the needed changes (David, 1989). It offered possibilities to the people within schools, as well as those within the community of the school. "When principals, teachers, staff, parents, and community members become involved in decision making, the structure might best be described as decentralized decision making that is shared" (Flanigan & Gray, 1995, p. 4).

Inherent within the concept of empowerment were several issues. One was that of autonomy; without it, empowerment was meaningless (Richardson et al., 1995). In schools, autonomy involved the authority to make decisions in the areas of budget, staff, and curriculum (David, 1989).

Without a more democratic structure for schools, "it is impossible to speak of teacher empowerment" (Romanish, 1993, p. 7). Giving teachers a voice in and authority over some of these decisions was a major issue.

"Empowered teachers are invested with authority to make significant decisions about the students for whom they hold responsibility" (Neufeld & McGowan, 1993, p. 249). This included having the authority to make choices about "every facet of classroom life" (Neufeld & McGowan, 1993, p. 249). An understanding of the teacher's autonomy was inherent in the topic of empowerment: "any movement toward genuine school restructuring, therefore, must be preceded by a clear declaration of what an empowered stance for teachers will mean" (Romanish, 1993, p. 2).

As a survey of over 2500 elementary and secondary principals showed, willingness to share authority was not a given (Lucas, Brown, & Markus, 1991). The "degree to which principals are willing to share decision-making rights with teachers is directly proportional to the perception of their own discretion and decision making" (Lucas et al., 1991, p. 62). For example, the principals in the study indicated they felt less autonomy over use of district funds and were, therefore, less willing to share related decisions with teachers. In their discussion of a professional development school using site-based management strategies, Neufeld and McGowan (1993) clarified that less district authority led to greater teacher autonomy. This was reflected in the principal's willingness to "share the power of leadership" (Neufeld & McGowan, 1993, p. 250).

Empowerment also involved organizational problem solving and decision making. "It embodies the idea that the decision about a problem can best be made at the lowest level in the organization or at the position closest to the problem--preferably where the process can lead to a solution"

(Flanigan & Gray, 1995, p. 16). Similarly, support for decisions followed from involvement in decision making (Haynes & Blomstedt, 1986). "Having influence upon a decision and having actively participated in a decision that's to take a course of action, can greatly strengthen motivation in making a change process successful" (Haynes & Blomstedt, 1986, p. 3).

Romanish (1993), speaking specifically about teachers, concurred:

"Teachers know they receive an inordinate amount of blame for poor school performance, yet possess a very small voice regarding the important decisions that affect their ability to be more successful" (p. 1).

Rosenholtz's (1989) study of the teachers' workplace examined shared school goals, teacher collaboration, teacher learning, teacher certainty, and teacher commitment. She defined "high consensus schools" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 38) as organizations in which principals and teachers agreed on the definition of teaching and the high prioritization of instructional goals. In such schools "shared goals, beliefs, and values led teachers through their talk to a more ennobling vision that placed teaching issues and children's interests in the forefront, and that bound them, including newcomers, to pursue that same vision" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 39).

The "high consensus school" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 38), with its "unified, collective thinking" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 39), may have led to teacher collaboration. Such a condition was part of an atypical social organization that encouraged teachers to work together to solve their instructional problems. It was "not an immutable fact of everyday life" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 41). This condition was still developing "among educational communities and its potential to enrich teaching and learning processes within the confines of a single classroom is not fully utilized"

(Pallante, 1993, p. 26). It was a phenomenon that was at opposites with "prevailing cultural values that esteem individual accomplishment" (Pallante, 1993, p. 30). However, Fullan (1993) cautioned against encouraging only collaboration at the expense of all individual value. He explained that the group needed to hear the voice of the individual, to prevent "groupthink" (Fullan, 1993, p. 33), almost as the conscience of the group:

Group-suppression or self-suppression of intuition and experiential knowledge is one of the major reasons why bandwagons and ill-conceived innovations flourish (and then inevitably fade, giving change a bad name.) It is for this reason that I see the individual as an under-valued source of reform. (Fullan, 1993, p. 35)

Yet, Fullan (1993) called collaboration one of the necessary change agency skills. It provided a balance; in collaborative workplaces, teachers were not isolated. "In contrast to the professional isolation that characterizes perhaps a majority of schools, faculty members in a growing number of schools give and accept advice, share ideas, and work together on school improvement projects" (Smith & Scott, 1990). Rosenholtz (1989) echoed the importance of this by-product of collaboration: "In the choreography of collaborative schools, norms of self-reliance appeared to be selfish infractions against the school community. With teaching defined as inherently difficult, many minds tended to work better together than the few" (p. 208).

Through Rosenholtz's (1989) study of teachers in "high consensus schools" (p. 38), she found that collaboration was a catalyst for meeting instructional goals. The teachers explained that "their sense of community and their own identity led most of them to persist unassailably in their goals

of student learning" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 207). With his emphasis on the teacher as learner, Fullan (1993) recognized the importance of collaboration and called it the "fourth capacity" (p. 17) of change agency. As such, collaboration became imperative as teachers became learners themselves and efforts were made to improve schools for student learners. "There is a ceiling effect to how much we can learn if we keep to ourselves. . . . People need one another to learn and to accomplish things" (Fullan, 1993, p. 17).

In collaborative schools, teacher leadership was strongly associated with instructional activities (Smith & Scott, 1990). Teacher/leaders were those "who showed initiative and willingness to experiment with new ideas, who offered motivation to other teachers, and who were willing and able to help other teachers solve instructional problems" (Smith & Scott, 1990, p. 15). Similarly, Rosenholtz's (1989) study of 78 schools found that "teacher leaders were identified as those who reached out to others with encouragement, technical knowledge to solve classroom problems, and enthusiasm for learning new things. (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 208).

Though the leadership involvement of teachers in collaborative schools may have increased, the principal's role was undiminished (Smith & Scott, 1990). One of the "unchanged tasks of the principal's authority and perspective" (Flanigan & Gray, 1995, p. 4) was to help the school maintain its focus on the needs and instruction of students. "Indeed, the key actor at the school level in initiating and facilitating collaboration is the principal, who must provide the support--time, resources, and encouragement--necessary to sustain teachers' collegial interaction" (Smith & Scott, 1990, p. 42). In their study of a school utilizing site-base management strategies, Strauber, Stanley, and Wagenknecht (1990) agreed with the important role

of a principal. "Since the principal's sphere of communication is much greater, our principal's influence has actually increased" (Strauber et al., 1990, p. 66).

Similarly, the success of shared decision making depended upon the principal. "In return, principals and schools gain much more than they ever give up" (Baldwin et al., 1995, p. 158). As facilitator for sharing decision making power, "the principal should see that professional staff members have the widest latitude possible in determining the human material and time allocation needed for effective learning" (Flanigan & Gray, 1995, p. 16).

The leadership role of the principal in schools with "high consensus" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 38) was paramount. Such principals "reweave schools that had come altogether unraveled" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 208). From their study of several empowered schools, Baldwin et al. (1995) also concluded that "school administrators play powerful roles in supporting and encouraging the meaningful participation of others in governing a school" (pp. 157-158). In such schools, the principal led through example, inspiration, and support. Lieberman and Miller (1984) concurred: "It is clear that the atmosphere and what is encouraged or discouraged among teachers are intimately tied to the behaviors of the principal" (p. 30). The norms of collaboration were not accidental; "principals seem to structure them in the workplace by offering ongoing invitations for substantive decision-making and faculty interaction" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 44).

Setting aside time for faculty planning and problem solving was a beginning strategy for building collaborative norms. Rosenholtz's (1989) research conclusions suggested four possible ways in which the norms for collaboration may "evolve directly from faculty decision-making" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 44). These included: use of technical decision

making to search for solutions to the problems they encounter, awareness of colleague talent and special skills for improving teaching, increase of behaviors which assist other teachers, and realization of every teacher's need for the help of others and the gain of giving and receiving assistance (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Team teaching, or shared responsibility for student instruction, was one strategy mentioned by Rosenholtz (1989) as a possible way of increasing mutual teacher awareness of the need for assistance. Another strategy was to encourage teacher interaction through collaborative decision-making about in-service programs. Smith and Scott (1990) outlined other strategies for assisting teachers as they "assume responsibility for their professional development" (p. 25). These included observing colleagues, peer coaching, mentoring, and using teacher support teams and teacher centers.

Sarason (1990) stated that teacher involvement in decisions that affect them was politically and morally justified. Similarly, "stakeholders have a moral obligation to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives" (Restine, 1995, p. xi). However, increasing teacher participation in decisions that affected them was more difficult than simply providing appropriate reasons and strategies. "It is highly improbable that principals can forge collaborative relations simply by inviting teachers to work together professionally" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 44). Simpson (1990) spelled out some of the missing, but crucial elements in his study of a collaborative school: "Without substantive efforts to include time for planning and professional growth, the hue and cry for collaboration, shared leadership, and participative management are blasts of hot air" (p. 35).

Chapman's (1988) study of teacher involvement in school decision making in Australia explained some of the deficiencies in the government requirements for change. She found that "organizational arrangements must ensure that participation in decision making does not detract from teaching" (Chapman, 1988, p. 70). In addition, only participation that related strongly to the learning and teaching processes, and their improvement, were appropriate for teacher involvement. Finally, "despite opportunities for involvement, teachers will be reluctant to participate if they feel they have little influence over the important decisions which are made and implemented" (Chapman, 1988, p. 71). Budget decisions and the allocation of resources were specific areas of frustration mentioned by the surveyed teachers (Chapman, 1988).

Though recent research (Baldwin et al., 1995; Flanigan & Gray, 1995; Smith & Scott, 1990) indicated the need for schools to empower teachers and others in decision making, it was not yet a concept thoroughly explored:

What has not been addressed is the how of empowerment.

How would teachers, parents, and the community participate in decision making in a restructured school? What would this type of school look like? Are there ways that a school administrator can support and encourage the meaningful participation of others in governing a school? (Baldwin et al., 1995, p. 146)

Paradigm Shifters from Inside Organizations

According to Barker (1992), the first two categories of "paradigm shifter" (p. 54) had something in common. The first person was new to the field, particularly someone who had just completed the training required for the position. This person had "studied the paradigm but never practiced in

it" (Barker, 1992, p. 57). The second category represented someone coming later in life from one field of expertise to another.

Though Barker (1992) recognized that those experienced with actually practicing the current paradigm in an organization were usually more effective and efficient at it, he asserted that the new person from categories one or two could offer a fresh perspective that was also valuable. While both of these new individuals lacked an understanding of the subtle workings of the current paradigm, this could be an advantage. When they faced one of its unsolvable problems they did not realize it. "Very simply, if you don't know you can't achieve something, sometimes you do it" (Barker, 1992, p. 59).

The third category of "paradigm shifter" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) was an insider to the existing paradigm, a person who operated within it and searched actively for the answers to its toughest questions. However, this person was viewed as a "maverick" (Barker, 1992, p. 63) in that he or she tended "to work at the fringes of their disciplines" (Barker, 1992, p. 63). Furthermore, they were not typically appreciated until the organization was in crisis. "Their advantage is that they are knowledgeable about the paradigm but not captured by it" (Barker, 1992, p. 64). Barker (1992) acknowledged that this category of individuals was rare. Of the business examples related, Barker (1992) stated:

In both cases, these behaviors were unusual in that each company was able to drive the paradigm shift from within rather than its being driven from without. Every company needs such rule breakers at crucial junctures. Very few get them--or, if they have them, know how to use them. (p. 64)

Various authors offered differing terms and definitions for the internal agents that played a part in the change process. Schmuck and Runkel (1985) addressed the roles of internal agents within a system participating in organization development by referring to inside consultants and cadre groups. In a description of one school's change efforts, Karr et al. (1994) called one teacher "a risk-taker" (p. 4) and added that others in the school trusted her. This individual "provided a communication channel between outside influences and the other teachers" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 4). Hord et al. (1987) used the term change facilitator to represent the person whose task was to "encourage, persuade, or push people to change, to adopt an innovation and use it in their daily schooling work" (p. 3).

Connor and Lake (1988) described change agents as those who made changes in the status quo and ascribed assorted roles to the change agents in organizations: catalysts, who recognized and made the shortcomings of the status quo "obvious" (p. 108); solution givers, who offered suggestions; process helpers, who assisted others in understanding the process of change; and resource linkers, who were expert at locating and applying "various financial, people, and knowledge resources" (p. 109). According to these authors, one person could carry out all of these roles from within the organization, but often these roles were played by several different people (Connor & Lake, 1988; Schmuck & Runkel, 1985).

Paradigm Pioneers

A "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71) was a person inside an organization who followed the lead of the "paradigm shifter" (Barker, 1992, p. 54), and realizing the direction the possible shift could take, made an intuitive judgment that influenced the organization to shift. "Without paradigm pioneers, paradigm shifts can falter, because paradigm pioneers

bring the elements of brains, brawn, time, effort, and capital to create the critical mass which drives the new paradigm the remainder of the way" (Barker, 1992, p. 72).

Though he did not use the words "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71), Kuhn (1970) spoke of the faith an individual needed to choose a new paradigm over the standard one, saying "that decision must be based less on past achievement than on future promise" (pp. 157-158). Speaking of paradigms and scientific revolution, he added:

The man who embraces a new paradigm at an early stage must often do so in defiance of the evidence provided by problem-solving. He must, that is, have faith that the new paradigm will succeed with the many large problems that confront it, knowing only that the older paradigm has failed with a few. A decision of that kind can only be made on faith. (Kuhn, 1970, p. 158)

For leaders on the inside of the organization, playing the role of "paradigm shifter" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) was not necessary. The role of "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71) was just as effective for the organization. Such a leader could cultivate the fresh insights of the "outsiders" (Barker, 1992, p. 55) that enter the organization and those that were not yet indoctrinated into the culture inside of it. Cultivation required listening to the ideas of the "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54).

Barker (1992) added, however, that proof was not available for making decisions based on the new paradigm. The professional risk to the "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71) was not one that could be ignored:

They leap a professional chasm that separates the old paradigm, where the territory is well illuminated and where reputations and positions are clearly defined, into a new territory, illuminated by the new paradigm in such a limited way that it is impossible to know whether they are standing on the edge of an unexplored continent or merely on a tiny island.

(Barker, 1992, p. 74)

Even in his writings of the history of scientific revolution, Kuhn (1970) supported this view. He stated that the job of the "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71) was to "develop" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 158) the paradigm in order that "hardheaded arguments can be produced and multiplied" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 158).

The transition period from one paradigm to a new one was not cumulative, but involved reconstruction that "changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 85). What followed the work of the developers, or "paradigm pioneers" (Barker, 1992, p. 71), was a progressive shift by others toward the new paradigm. "Rather than a single group conversion, what occurs is an increasing shift in the distribution of professional allegiances" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 158). In speaking of scientific revolutions, Kuhn (1970) explained the completion of the shift as follows:

During the transition period there will be a large but never complete overlap between the problems that can be solved by the old and by the new paradigm. But there will also be a decisive difference in the modes of solution. When the transition is complete, the profession will have changed its view of the field, its methods, and its goals. (p. 85)

Barker (1992) further explored the manager or administrator role in encouraging two categories of "paradigm shifters" (p. 54). He advocated that the indoctrination process for new members be suspended. In its place, he said that the organization's leader should give the newcomer several of the existing paradigm's problems and ask them to work on solving them. Then the leader should listen to the ideas and "dumb questions" (Barker, 1992, p. 59) of these individuals.

Their insights, though they may or may not have led the organization toward a new paradigm, may have helped the leader learn two necessary skills: "how to listen outside the boundaries and how to reinforce your people for taking risks" (Barker, 1992, p. 61). The resulting atmosphere, one "conducive to exploration" (Barker, 1992, p. 61), would better allow the organization to recognize the possibilities of the approaching paradigm while still operating within the comforts of the current one.

Barker (1992) interviewed organizational leaders who had tried this approach and offered two key gains. In one case, a business leader trying this approach stated that he had "more good suggestions in the six months from the inception of this approach than he had in the last six years" (Barker, 1992, p. 63). In addition, the experienced staff members observed the collaboration between the leader and the newcomers and began offering their suggestions for improving the organization as well.

The Change Agent Role of Principals

As part of their discussion of the roles that contributed to the change process, Connor and Lake (1988) explained the role of a non-change agent, the stabilizer. They explained this as a management role that "has to do with solidifying the change" (Connor & Lake, 1988, p. 109). "Once the

change is implemented, the organization must be stabilized around it" (Connor & Lake, 1988, p. 109).

Due to the prevalence of models of change used in stimulating educational reform, those hoping to accomplish needed transformations targeted school leaders. In such models the principal, as school head, was expected to be the instrument of change in schools, and school level personnel were simply expected to implement top-down policy directives (Murphy & Beck, 1994). "Increasingly, American policy makers have come to view principals as linchpins in plans for educational change and as a favoured target for school reforms" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 35).

In the early stages of this push, principals experienced a change from their previous role of conservator of the status quo to manager of pre-packaged curriculum programs. The principal's function became one of managing the use of goals and processes conceived by those outside the school. However, the efforts at school improvement fell short of their expectations because the new role emphasized managerial behavior rather than ownership and responsibility for change (Hallinger, 1992).

Some of this failure may have been due to confusion of roles. Change facilitators (CF), or those who supported and encouraged others to change, were crucial. Yet, according to Hord et al. (1987) clear understanding of their roles was vital. "Central office staff may think a principal is the CF, while the principal may believe this role resides in the central office" (Hord et al., 1987, p. 3).

Various authors reinforced the importance of the principal in changing schools. Aquila and Galovic (1988) stated: "The principal is the key to change. The effective schools research documents this role. Conventional wisdom also suggests that change will not occur without the approval and

encouragement of the principal" (p. 50). In their study of teachers' perceptions of the principal's change agent role, Haynes and Blomstedt (1986) found that expectations were great, though expressed in diverse ways. They concluded that "the role of the middle manager, or the principal, is especially vulnerable and at the same time vital for successful educational change" (Haynes & Blomstedt, 1986, p. 13).

Yet, Senge (1990) cautioned against leaders imposing their beliefs and visions upon others. He advocated that leaders determine the commonality among individuals' visions through listening and searching for shared visions as beginning points for change. Similarly, Fullan (1993) explained that "vision and strategic planning come later" (p. 28). If these were formalized too soon in the change process, they constricted the interaction necessary to the individual and group development of vision. According to Schmuck and Runkel (1985), principals could act as consultants for their staffs. "Although principals cannot easily remove themselves from the flow of school life, they can start the conditions necessary for communicating, goal setting, problem solving, and decision making" (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985, p. 502).

The Change Agent Role of Teachers

According to studies by Baldrige and Deal (1983), suggestions for change made from inside organizations fit a pattern of professional-centered concerns, not client-centered ones. The primary issues surrounded increases in money and decision making, decreases in amounts of evaluations, and improvements in working conditions. The assertion was that better situations for the professionals created better situations for the clients. "The changes requested by professionals . . . are usually self-

serving, small in scale, and have little impact on client's needs" (Baldrige & Deal, 1983, p. 212).

A list of seven strategies were offered by Baldrige and Deal (1983) to assist those inside the organization interested in changing it to better meet the needs of the client. They asserted that "effective political change" (Baldrige & Deal, 1983, p. 214) agents should focus their efforts and carefully choose their fights. "We do not always fight to win today; sometimes we fight today so that we can win tomorrow" (Baldrige & Deal, 1983, p. 215).

Carrow-Moffet (1993) added that those in schools needed "leaders who are change agents at every level of the system; leaders who are willing to embrace change and direct it" (p. 62). She explained that this need for diversity in leadership should include an increase in teacher decision making, as current trends dictated. This idea of shared leadership was found in the brief discussion of one high school's shift toward a "climate for change" (Benjamin & Gard, 1993, p. 63). Following their explanation of the improvements made in communication and culture, these authors stated: "Finally, we challenged the assumption that leadership is centralized at the top of a pyramid. Our faculty is composed of strong, diverse, committed leaders" (Benjamin & Gard, 1993, p. 66).

Fullan (1993) advocated that each individual in an organization should be a change agent, particularly teachers. Also, they should have a strong moral purpose to guide them. "Each and every teacher has the responsibility to help create an organization capable of individual and collective inquiry and continuous renewal, or it will not happen" (Fullan, 1993, p. 39). Similarly, Barth (1990) explained the need for schools to develop a "community of leaders" (p. 9). Though he included every

individual in the school, even students and parents, his discussion outlined the need for teachers to have and to take advantage of opportunities to lead.

Bosler and Bauman (1992) took the idea of teachers as change agents capable of transforming schools one step further. They advocated that teachers must become leaders and change agents in order to model leadership and change agency to their students. Of transformational leadership, Bosler and Bauman (1992) wrote:

This form of leadership is an interactive process that raises both the leader (teacher) and the subordinates (students) to a higher level of aspiration and commitment to change.

Transformational leadership is characterized by three major components: (1) the clarity of vision, (2) the empowerment of subordinates, and (3) the emphasis on change. (p. 5)

Agreement from Schmuck and Runkel (1985) indicated that, just as administrators could lead organization development activities, teachers could also act as organization development consultants. This was particularly true, "at least in matters in which they do not have too strong a personal stake" (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985, p. 503).

The External/Internal Change Paradox

Recent research showed change as a force, not to be controlled from the bottom or the top, but as being "ubiquitous and relentless, forcing itself on us at every turn" (Fullan, 1993, p. vii). Efforts for producing planned change, while possibly effective for individual projects, were not suitable for the intricacies that were schools (Fullan, 1994).

Forced changes from the top-down, through state testing, tightened standards, or by legislation did not automatically succeed in creating

educational reform (Corbett & Wilson, 1990; Sarason, 1990). In fact, such efforts have had the opposite effect; telling people they "*will* change" (Sarason, 1990, p. 123) evolved from a "theory that assumes an understanding of schools as erroneous as it is laughable--not funny laughable, but grimly laughable" (Sarason, 1990, p. 123). The results were the reverse of the "teacher motivation, morale, and collegial interaction necessary to bring about reform" (Fullan, 1994, p. 187). Fullan (1994) concluded, "governments can't mandate what matters, because what matters most are local motivation, skills, know-how, and commitment" (p. 187).

This assertion that external forces, even accepted through voluntary adoption, were not enough to create lasting and substantial change in education was supported through the extensive Rand Change Agent study (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). Their study examined adoption of chosen federal programs at 293 sites and found general failure of the programs. The culprit, according to Berman and McLaughlin (1978), was the motivation for the adoption.

While the actual reasons for adoption varied, from desire for federal funds to placation of local interest groups, these were generalized as "opportunistic" (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978, p. 14) on the part of local officials, rather than adoption for educational concerns and improvements. Goodlad (1992) supported the importance of the educational purpose in reform efforts; "top-down, politically driven education reform movements are addressed primarily to restructuring" (p. 238). In fact "they have little to say about educating" (Goodlad, 1992, p. 238).

Furthermore, the complexity of change in organizations prevented the success of top-down reform. "Complex change processes cannot be

controlled from the top" (Fullan, 1994, p. 190). Though speaking of business organizations, Senge (1990) added:

The perception that someone 'up there' is in control is based on an illusion--the illusion that anyone could master the dynamic and detailed complexity of an organization from the top. . . .

The illusion of being in control can appear quite real. In hierarchical organizations, leaders give orders and others follow. But giving orders is not the same as being in control. Power may be concentrated at the top but having the power of unilateral decision making is not the same as being able to achieve one's objectives. (p. 290)

The dissatisfaction with top-down change initiatives has caused "some to conclude that only decentralized, locally driven reform can succeed" (Fullan, 1994, p. 187). This has led to the recent emphasis on site-based management. Such attempts were "problematic either because individual schools lack the capacity to manage change or because assessment of attempted changes cannot be tracked" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 200). Further, the alteration of government within schools emphasized restructuring, rather than affecting "the teaching-learning core of schools" (Fullan, 1994, p. 187).

Various authors, from studies of schools involved in site-based management particularly, indicated that these attempts at change were not sufficient to sustain improvement (David, 1989; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991; Fullan, 1994). A study by Taylor and Teddlie (as cited in Fullan, 1994) of 33 schools and their classrooms from one school district revealed that though some of the schools using site-based management approaches had increased teacher participation in decisions, little changed in the

classroom. In addition, no increases in teacher collaboration were uncovered in this study, except in two schools without site-based management.

Similarly, a study by Weiss (as cited in Fullan, 1994) found that use of shared decision making in twelve high schools in almost as many states produced more teacher-reported alterations of the decision-making process, but no increase in attention to the schools' missions or to student concerns. This finding was reiterated in a synthesis of school-based management research by David (1989). "Restructuring efforts such as site-based management have not yet demonstrated that they focus on, let alone alter, the deeper second-order changes required for reform" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 202).

Similarly, Fullan (1994) pointed out four "deficiencies" (p. 191), or difficulties, with expecting decentralized patterns alone to successfully change organizations. The first admitted that organizations, "schools, in particular, are not known for their innovativeness" (Fullan, 1994, p. 191), and rarely "initiate change in the absence of external stimuli" (Fullan, 1994, p. 191). Second, as pointed out previously, structural changes were more often the result of site-based management than educational changes. The third shortcoming was that accountability and quality control were not improved through decentralization. Finally, Fullan (1994) pointed out that, though "one could speculate that it is possible for a given school to become highly innovative, despite the district it is in" (p. 191), it was probably not possible to remain innovative. "District action or inaction--personnel transfers, hiring decisions, budget decisions, and the like--inevitably take their toll" (Fullan, 1994, p. 191).

Planned change from the top-down and normative-reeducative strategies which emphasized change from the bottom-up described two ends of the change continuum which were inadequate to ensure that the changes espoused by either would find their way into the classroom (Corbett, Firestone, & Rossman, 1987). "Neither centralized nor decentralized approaches work" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 200).

Two patterns were the typical response to this lack of success with a single-sided push for change in school districts (Fullan, 1994). The first was for one "ideological preference" (Fullan, 1994, p. 189) to lay false claims to success and apply pressure for their preference to win out over the obvious obstacles. The second pattern relied on "ambivalence about which way to go, usually resulting in flip-flops or swings from top-down to bottom-up emphasis" (Fullan, 1994, p. 189). Senge (1990) called this pattern "on again/off again" (p. 291) vacillation between two ways of making decisions. When the business of organizations was going smoothly, the power became more decentralized. Yet, "when business begins to founder, the first instincts are to return control to central management" (Senge, 1990, p. 291). Neither of these patterns remained effective for working through change (Fullan, 1994).

According to Fullan (1994), top-down, bottom-up paradox was the result of this failure. "When two alternative positions--opposite solutions, really--are both found to be basically flawed, it normally means that a paradox lies behind the problem" (Fullan, 1994, p. 191). Neither centralization nor decentralization alone could initiate and maintain substantive change. Neither one was successful while at odds with the other. When such a paradox occurred "a shift in mindset is required--from either/or to both/and thinking" (Fullan, 1994, p. 191).

The development of a "fit" (Marsh & Odden, 1991, p. 234) between top-down, bottom-up, internal and external pressures was proposed as a key to effective change in educational organizations. In their study of 26 business organizations, Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990) found that "effective revitalization occurs when managers follow a critical path that obtains the benefits of top-down as well as bottom-up change efforts while minimizing their disadvantages" (pp. 68-69). Pascale (1990), studying the Ford Motor Company, proclaimed that "change flourishes in a 'sandwich.' When there is consensus above, and pressure below, things happen" (p. 126).

The purpose of school improvement has been interpreted as "help[ing] schools accomplish their educational goals more efficiently and effectively for all students" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 203). Some school systems have pursued this task successfully "using what amounts to simultaneous top-down/bottom-up approaches" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 201). From the viewpoint of effective and collaborative schools' research, these school systems were "actively part of a wider network in which external and internal influences are equally important" (Fullan, 1994, p. 192).

The role of the center or district in such school systems was one of providing top-down support and encouragement. Karr et al. (1994) described this support in their study of a school-level change initiative encouraged from the top. Specifically, the top-down push should "help formulate 'general direction'; gather and feed back performance data; focus on selection, promotion, and replacement; and provide resources and opportunities for continuous staff development" (Fullan, 1994, p. 193). The role of the local or school level was to provide bottom-up action. This

included developing a shared vision, a culture that encouraged collaboration, a problem-solving ability, and a proactive stance with external forces (Fullan, 1994). The latter included one of Fullan's (1993) critical lessons of change agency, through which he emphasized the important role of schools in making a "connection with the wider environment" (p. 38).

According to recent research (Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 1994), complex organizations were unable to change in any prescribed or linear set of steps. "If one tries to match the complexity of the situation with complex implementation plans, the process becomes unwieldy, cumbersome and usually wrong" (Fullan, 1993, p. 24). However, non-linear change "does work in approximate patterns that point clearly to the types of strategies that are more or less likely to be effective" (Fullan, 1994, p. 193).

While studying 26 companies, Beer et al. (1990) found that these patterns typically began, not with the centralized or top-down push for change through strategies like staff-development and vision building, but with localized or bottom-up efforts on a small scale. Fullan (1994) explained that in such studies "isolated pockets of change reflecting new behaviors led to new thinking that eventually pushed structures and procedures to change" (p. 194). From this pattern, Fullan (1994) stated "the interesting hypothesis that reculturing leads to restructuring more effectively than the reverse" (p. 194).

While there was a reciprocal relationship between structural change and cultural change within organizations, the relationship was more successfully revitalized when the culture changed from individual, small-group behavior first:

Reform is much more powerful when teachers and administrators begin working in new ways, only to discover

that school structures must be altered, than the reverse situation--when rapidly implemented new structures create confusion, ambiguity, and conflict, ultimately leading to retrenchment. (Fullan, 1994, p. 194)

As the culture at the bottom of the organization changed, "pressure mounts to alter the organization that is now experienced as ill-fitted to the new emerging patterns" (Fullan, 1994, p. 198). As the top-down, formal organization adapted, the bottom-up forces were then "further propelled" (Fullan, 1994, p. 194) toward change and the organization was successfully revitalized (Beer et al., 1990). "Breakthroughs occur when productive connections amass, creating growing pressure for systems to change" (Fullan, 1994, p. 201)

"Ambiguities and tensions always accompany complex change processes" (Fullan, 1994, p. 193). Neither school districts nor individual schools could change and develop effectively without the development of the other. "Some form of combined top-down/bottom-up relationship will be essential for effectiveness" (Fullan, 1994, p. 198). However, greater exploration of this relationship was called for: "We are still at the very early stages of rethinking the relationship between schools and districts" (Fullan, 1994, p. 198).

Schools as Learning Organizations

According to Bjork (1983), organizations were "social inventions that are both fluid and dynamic. They move in time and space, act and react, and are shaped by a combination of external and internal environmental factors that . . . provide impetus for modification" (Bjork, 1983, p. 6). He explained further by adding that "the manner in which environmental

influences affect organizations . . . is an important focus for organizational research" (Bjork, 1983, p. 6).

As asserted by Sarason (1990), national reform efforts in education have failed to bring substantial changes to schools because they have focused upon alteration of specific aspects, rather than dealing with the relationships of all aspects. Reformers ignored the concept that ". . . what you seek to change is so embedded in a system of interacting parts that if it is changed, then changes elsewhere are likely to occur" (Sarason, 1990, p. 16).

This further complicated both the role of education in creating change and the role of change as it affected schools.

The new problem of change, then, . . . is [determining] what it would take to make the educational system a learning organization--expert at dealing with change as a normal part of its work, not just in relation to the latest policy, but as a way of life. (Fullan, 1993, p. ix)

One of the roles of the effectively changing school was to "develop the habits and skills of learning organizations" (Fullan, 1994, p. 193).

Barth (1984) advocated building a community of learners in schools, beginning with the principal, for "the quality of a school is related to the quality of its leadership" (p. 93). The school was the focus of growth and development for the adults it housed, as well as for the students:

A school is above all a community of learners. . . . When a principal is alive and growing, so are teachers, so are students, and so is the school. Indeed, there is no more potent way for a principal to create a community of learners than by engaging in and modeling learning. (Barth, 1984, p. 94)

Barth (1990) took issue with the proliferation of lists that proposed characteristics of effective schools, staffs, and practices which purported to improve all schools. He explained that these lists implied that schools "do not have the capacity or the will to improve themselves" (Barth, 1990, p. 38) and that school improvement was "an attempt to identify what schoolpeople should know and be able to do and to devise ways to get them to know and do it" (p. 38). He offered several reasons why this "list logic" (Barth, 1990, p. 38) persisted and why it was ineffective. "The vivid lack of congruence between the way schools are and the way others' lists would have them be causes most schoolpeople to feel overwhelmed, insulted, and inadequate--hardly building blocks for improving schools or professional relationships" (Barth, 1990, p. 39).

Barth (1990) added that educators "are growing weary of the logic of lists and would prefer that their own common sense be taken seriously, even honored" (p. 42). He called for emphasis on a "community of learners" (Barth, 1984, p. 94), in which everyone involved with schools was engaged in learning simultaneously. "School is not a place for important people who do not need to learn and unimportant people who do. Instead, school is a place where students discover, and adults rediscover, the joys, the difficulties, and the satisfactions of learning" (Barth, 1990, p. 43).

For Barth (1990), the question was not one of which items belonged on the list nor of which list to choose. The question became: "Under what conditions will principal and student and teacher become serious, committed, sustained, lifelong, cooperative learners?" (Barth, 1990, p. 45). Following this approach, the assumptions about improvement revolved around the school's capacity to improve itself within the right conditions. Those outside schools could assist in providing the right conditions. School

improvement would become the effort to "determine and provide, from without and within, conditions under which the adults and youngsters who inhabit schools will promote and sustain learning among themselves" (Barth, 1990, p. 45).

According to Fullan (1993), the conditions necessary for communities of learners and eventually, learning organizations, to be built were two: individuals, and then the institution as a whole, must have had both an explicit moral purpose and change agency skills. Moral purpose at the individual level involved an explicit desire to make a difference, to improve the lives of students. This commitment must have been made explicit; broader connections to societal improvement must have been inherent. "It must be seen that one cannot make a difference at the interpersonal level unless the problem and solution are enlarged to encompass the conditions that surround teaching" (Fullan, 1993, p. 11).

In addition, moral purpose should be linked to the change agency skills, "the skills and actions that would be needed to make a difference" (Fullan, 1993, p. 11). "Moral purpose needs an engine, and that engine is individual, skilled change agents pushing for changes around them, intersecting with other like minded individuals and groups to form the critical mass necessary to bring about continuous improvements" (Fullan, 1993, p. 40). He recognized four capacities of change agency: personal vision-building, or that which came from within and gave meaning to work; inquiry or questioning persistently; mastery or learning and improving continuously; and collaboration or learning from and working with others. Fullan (1993) stressed the importance of these two areas, both for individuals and then for organizations:

Without moral purpose, aimlessness and fragmentation prevail.

Without change agency, moral purpose stagnates. The two are dynamically interrelated, not only because they need each other, but because they quite literally *define* (and redefine) each other as they interact. (Fullan, 1993, p. 18)

He added that these two areas alone, but particularly in combination, were "as yet society's great untapped resources for improvement" (Fullan, 1993, p. 18). In schools, the importance of teachers' moral purposes and the development of their change agency skills were especially overlooked.

Summary

This review of the literature was arranged and written with the goals of informing the data collection and data analysis phases of research. Several broad areas of research were reviewed to offer a basis for the context of this study which detailed and analyzed one school's changes over a bounded (Stake, 1988) period. These included the reform movement on a national level; the middle school movement as manifested nationally, regionally, and in Georgia; and the traditional roles of staff members within schools.

As the lens through which the events over the bounded (Stake, 1988), eighteen-year period at Farpoint Middle School were to be examined, an overview of change theory was provided. The two major sections of this review were divided according to whether the factors and roles influencing change were external or internal to schools. The major aspects of external factors included paradigms, "paradigm shifts" (Barker, 1992, p. 37), "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) that join schools from outside, and a sparsely researched area of external change involving the influence from

institutions of higher education. The latter included a discussion of the need for a "bridge" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7) between schools and universities.

The attitudes and culture affecting schools were two areas explored as internal factors affecting school change. The power relationships in and around schools appeared as a theme in these two areas, which led into a section that looked at the impact of staff empowerment on change in schools. Teacher leadership, not merely teacher participation, emerged as a major concept of this section. This theme continued within the last four topics; specific change agency skills and agents of change were closely scrutinized as internal factors for "paradigm shifts" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) in schools. The change agent role of principals as leaders was also examined. In fact, teacher and principal roles in the change process were difficult to separate; together, the two seem to be mutually conducive to change in schools.

As almost a synthesis of the two areas, the external/internal paradox of change was examined. This area belonged neither in the external nor internal divisions of the chapter; the paradox was that both were necessary to the initiation and maintenance of change processes in schools. The support and ideas of external environments were crucial, just as the push for change from inside educational organizations was vital to success of the change process.

Finally, schools as "learning organizations" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4) were discussed. The premise here was that schools and their external environments, as they become "learning organizations" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4), involve and utilize the salient elements affecting the change processes. Among these components were the support of external environments,

attention to the moral purpose of individual staff members and the collaborative whole, and the development of change agency skills.

This study was an attempt to understand the transition of Farpoint Middle School over the course of a bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period. Its attempt to do so was guided and balanced by the literature of reform, the middle school movement, roles of staff, change theory, and "learning organizations" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This study examined the changes that took place at Farpoint Middle School, a rural school in Georgia, over a bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period from 1978 to 1996. Although it did not meet the state requirements for a middle school, eventually its staff sought to develop an appropriate middle school philosophy for meeting the unique needs of its young adolescent students. The researcher sought to understand and describe the changes as well as the internal and external factors that drove them. Thus, the study was descriptive rather than predictive, utilizing techniques associated with qualitative research.

Research Questions

The primary objectives of the study were to describe and understand the change processes that occurred during the transition of Farpoint Middle School toward the middle school concept. The research was initially focused by development of "subquestions" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25) which included: What changes took place at Farpoint Middle School over the eighteen-year period? What roles did external agents play? What roles did internal agents play? What events drove the change processes? What elements within the culture, climate, and power structure of the school facilitated the change processes? What is the prognosis for the future of Farpoint Middle School as a changing, growing educational organization? These "subquestions" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25) illustrated how the study was initially guided. However, the objectives and

the "subquestions" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25) changed little during actual conduct of the research process.

Procedures

The researcher attempted to describe the context and processes of change, then understand these processes, as they took place at Farpoint Middle School. These objectives guided the research and site exploration throughout the study. They also determined the methodology, particularly the use of techniques associated with qualitative research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

Qualitative techniques provided the approach for disciplined inquiry, yet the flexibility for emergent understanding that this study required (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The data collected in this ethnographic study provided clues to the meaning that participants attached to the events they experienced. It was this insider's perspective that the researcher sought in order to understand the change processes that occurred at Farpoint Middle School. Thus, ethnographic methods such as participant observation, moderately-scheduled (Bjork, 1983; Stewart & Cash, 1982) individual or group interviews and analysis of current documents, were necessary and suitable. Ethnographic methods were those which "use current behavior--verbal and nonverbal--as their dominant source of data" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 33).

However, the objectives of this study required research of an extended period of time, reaching eighteen years into the past. This required application of techniques appropriate for historical study, particularly a review of available documents from the past. However, the methodology was not simply historical, which would refer to a study that

relied "principally upon written artifacts which recorded past human behavior" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 33).

Instead, the study required a combination of ethnographical and historical techniques, or ethnohistorical (Bjork, 1983; Schumacher, 1972) methodology. This combination referred to the study of the past through examination and description of past events from the perspective of those involved. Accordingly, change at Farpoint Middle School was examined both through use of documents and face-to-face contact with the adults in this school.

Therefore, the objectives of the study necessitated the selection of qualitative, ethnohistorical (Bjork, 1983; Schumacher, 1972) research methodology as appropriate to the study of change in this rural middle school in South Georgia over the bounded (Stake, 1988), eighteen-year period from 1978 to 1996. Data collection methods were chosen accordingly.

Data Collection

Subjects

As interactive methods, such as interviewing and participant observation indicated, the people involved in the transition at Farpoint Middle School provided the bulk of the data collected. During each round of interviewing, an emphasis was placed on building researcher-respondent rapport in order to enhance understanding of the inside perspective and to better inform the research (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

The individuals interviewed fell into several categories. School employees made up the largest section of interviewees, including those who were with the school since 1978 (the beginning of the study); those who were with the school in 1978, but who were no longer employed there by

1996; those who came and went during the bounded (Stake, 1988) period from 1978 to 1996; and those who arrived during or after 1978. In addition, interviews were held with county and university employees who were connected with the school without actually working there.

At Farpoint Middle School, groups were interviewed as well as individuals. The data collected from group interviews were in the form of stories, myths, and anecdotes. "These data indicate what is important and unimportant, how people view each other, and how they evaluate their participation in groups and programs" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 110). The group members were selected for both their knowledge and their observational skills, with the goal that such group interviews could lead the researcher toward understanding of the dominant themes of concern to various groups (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

Qualitative studies commonly masked the identity of the places and persons studied (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Despite the positive nature of the changes that occurred there, this protocol was observed during the study of Farpoint Middle School. The locations were masked as Farpoint Middle School and Deneb County. Those interviewed were each labeled by an arbitrary letter of the alphabet, with no accompanying distinction as to the interviewee's role relative to the school. This allowed for some anonymity and protection for individuals and groups, even from others who knew the situation well.

Participant Observation

Contemporary ethnographic and qualitative research is often "equated with hermeneutic or interpretive research, . . . [which is] a concern for interpreting and recounting accurately the meanings which research participants give to the reality around them" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.

31). Specifically, participant observation allowed the researcher to be less dependent upon "static cross-sectional data but allows real study of social processes and complex interdependencies in social systems" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 2) like those found at Farpoint Middle School.

Because of its usefulness in studying social systems, participant observation was employed to explore questions under study at Farpoint Middle School. This method was "a characteristic style of research which makes use of a number of methods and techniques--observation, informant interviewing, document analysis, respondent interviewing, and participation with self-analysis" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. i).

Therefore, participant observation, since it was not limited to a single or to even a few techniques, allowed the researcher a full range of perspectives to be used at Farpoint Middle School. Throughout this study, the combination of techniques was critical to producing a careful examination of events in the field (Jorgensen, 1989). The collection of techniques best fitted to the situation were used. For example, the researcher participated as an observer, depending extensively on collection of documents and use of moderately-scheduled interviews (Bjork, 1983; Stewart & Cash, 1982).

Given that the researcher was a participant through part of the changes at Farpoint Middle School from 1982 to 1992, this participant observer methodology was further deemed to be appropriate. Through this research strategy the researcher gained access to and both observed and experienced "the meanings and interactions of people from the role of an insider" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 21). The participant role allowed the researcher admittance to the daily lives of those most familiar with the situation under study. The rapport established between the participant

observer and those native to the situation was a critical element in this study.

However, according to Jorgensen (1989), the degree of a participant observer's involvement could be varied from marginal participation to native performance. Similarly, the involvement could range from overt participation with the full knowledge of those already in the situation, to covert participation without their knowledge, to selective participation in which some insiders knew the researcher's purposes (Jorgensen, 1989). As "the character of field relations heavily influences the researcher's ability to collect accurate, truthful information" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 21), this researcher utilized overt participation, which allowed the researcher to openly observe the "world of everyday life" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 15) experienced by those being studied. This was possible because the researcher was neither manipulating nor creating the environment of the study.

Therefore, participant observation was used to "generate practical and theoretical truths about human life grounded in the realities of daily existence" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 14) at Farpoint Middle School. Participant observation attempted to "elicit from people their definitions of reality" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, pp. 109-110) and included a focus upon the viewpoint of the insider. According to Jorgensen (1989), people made sense of the world around them through daily encounters and experiences; the meanings they derived determined their future interactions. The insider's conception of reality, not readily accessible and understandable to an outsider, required participant observation methodology "to uncover, make accessible, and reveal the meanings (realities) people use to make sense out of their daily lives" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 15).

In addition, the methods of participant observation initiated concepts, generalizations, and theories through the "logic of discovery" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 18). This approach required an open-ended exploration of the setting and its situations; "this process and logic of inquiry requires the researcher to define the problem of study and be constantly open to its redefinition based on information collected in the field" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 18). Participant observation was utilized to determine the "organizing constructs" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 110) people attached to their world. Therefore, qualitative descriptions gained through participant observation were useful for defining the meanings people attach to their everyday lives at Farpoint Middle School.

Participant observation had been traditionally used as a "nonjudgmental strategy for acquiring data to depict social groups and cultural scenes authentically" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 111). More recently it was utilized for description and interpretation in educational studies. It was the only appropriate method for conducting this research due to its ". . . exceptional[ity] for studying processes, relationships among people and events, the organization of people and events, continuities over time, and patterns, as well as the immediate sociocultural contexts in which human existence unfolds" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 12).

Interviews

Participation observation included strategies such as document analysis, interviews with respondents and informants, and observations followed by self-analysis (McCall & Simmons, 1969). Techniques used for interviewing varied according to the situation and the purpose of the interview (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Structured, group, and various types of unstructured interviews were available. Recent literature leaned toward a

multi-method approach for interviewing. "Many scholars are now realizing that to pit one type of interviewing against another is a futile effort, a leftover from the paradigmatic quantitative/qualitative hostility of past generations" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 373).

Structured interviewing, according to Fontana and Frey (1994) was based upon use of a pre-established list of questions and a predetermined set of categories; the responses of the interviewee were categorized and coded accordingly, with minimal variation and minimal input from the interviewer. The sequence of questioning was rigid, and the role of the interviewer was strictly neutral. No suggestions, interpretations, explanations, interruptions nor improvisations were tolerated by this style of interviewing (Fontana & Frey, 1994). It was, in effect, a clinical application of a survey questionnaire frequently used in quantitative research studies (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

The unstructured interview was a less formal rendition of the structured interview and "is used in an attempt to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 366). In addition, the basic element of unstructured interviewing was the establishment of interviewer-respondent interaction based upon the researcher's desire to understand, rather than to explain. Unstructured interviews were categorized by the purpose of the interview, but the open-ended, in-depth ethnographic interview was the most basic type (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Within this category, the use of the moderately-scheduled interview (Bjork, 1983; Stewart & Cash, 1982) technique allowed this researcher the flexibility to rearrange the questions for enhancing

conversational flow or add questions to probe further into areas which developed during the interviews.

As explained by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), ethnographic interviewing was a more formal and ordered process than that used to ask questions during or following observations. During an interview, "you ask about that which you cannot see or can no longer see" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 64), but the basic outline of questions remained the same during a complete round of interviews. This process for finding out the participants' explanations of events assisted this researcher in focusing on the meaning of the events from the perspective of the participants at Farpoint Middle School.

Both group and individual interviews were included, along with observations of group meetings and staff functions. Group interviews were an additional variation on the interview process used by qualitative researchers (Fontana & Frey, 1994). These "provide the basis for determining the extent to which formal and informal goals and objectives of a group are being met" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 110). Group interviewing involved either formal or informal settings and systematic questioning of several respondents at the same time. "Today, group interviews in general are generically designated 'focus group' interviews, even though there is considerable variation in the natures and types of group interviews" (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

While used frequently in marketing research for gathering consumer opinions and in political arenas for discerning voter reactions, group interviewing was also used in sociological research. One study indicated that Malinowski and other early anthropologists used group interviewing for

gathering data, though the method itself was not specifically named as such (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

Group interviews were viewed by Fontana and Frey (1994) to be cost effective, data intensive, and flexible. "The group interview is essentially a qualitative data gathering technique that finds the interviewer/moderator directing the interaction and inquiry in a very structured or very unstructured manner, depending on the interview's purpose" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 365). Disadvantages, mentioned by Fontana and Frey (1994), included a propensity for emerging group-think and the concern that some individuals dominated the tone of the interview.

In this study, the use of group interviews allowed respondents to brainstorm and produce cumulative recall, because they were stimulating for interviewees beyond the level achieved in individual interviews (Fontana & Frey, 1994). However, the researcher had to allow more time than originally expected for this type of interview; brainstormed responses did not always remain connected with the question asked by the researcher. Skills at balancing group dynamics, redirecting the responses to the topic, and attending to the content of the interview, were essential for this researcher (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

Interviewing a select group was recognized as an important technique; interviewing a group of people "brought together as a discussion and resource group, is more valuable many times over than any representative sample" (Blumer, 1969, p. 365). In this study, the goals of group interviews were to gain additional perspective on the insider viewpoint and additional data for analysis. Group interviews were not intended to replace individual interviewing; they were utilized in conjunction with it.

Document Collection

In addition to the data collected through direct participant observation and moderately-scheduled interviews (Bjork, 1983; Stewart & Cash, 1982) with both individuals and groups, the researcher collected and analyzed relevant documents. Typically, documents used in qualitative studies, paired with participant observation, ranged from written data in the form of newspapers, letters, diaries, and memoranda; to additional forms of communication such as videotapes and photographs; to artifacts like tools, art, and clothing (Jorgensen, 1989).

In this ethnohistorical study in particular, the documents available included actual surveys completed by teachers. The researcher's first-hand knowledge of events contributed to the identification of written documents, such as one survey which showed teachers' concerns about Farpoint Middle School with regard to elements of the middle school concept. Other documents included minutes from faculty meetings and notes concerning guest speaker appearances.

In addition, formal documentation, such as Board of Education minutes, verified the changes in progress at Farpoint Middle. Personal writing or papers by teachers for university courses also assisted the researcher in gaining a greater grasp of the perspectives of those involved throughout the bounded (Stake, 1988) time period. The compilation of these documents added to the data gathered through interviews and participant observation. Together the information assisted the researcher in understanding the change processes at Farpoint Middle School during the eighteen years up through 1996.

Data Management

Data collected through participant observation, including interviews, were recorded with respondent permission. Each interviewee signed a consent form prior to the interview, which included a section giving permission for tape recording. Notes of field activities and other noteworthy experiences was kept. Tape recording was used as both a form of debriefing for the researcher immediately following observations and as a backup for written notes taken during interviews.

"Depending on the nature and extent of participant involvement, the researcher's immediate experience can be an extremely valuable source of data" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 22). However, this researcher was one individual among a collection of individuals; "the interactive stream is too complex and too subtle to be captured completely, even by a team of observers" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 111). Since "neither recording everything nor 'getting it all down' are attainable goals for participant observers" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 111), the researcher concentrated on the more attainable goal of recording points highly relevant to the conceptual framework defined.

Reliability and Validity of Data

Triangulation enhanced the reliability and validity of the data. Triangulation was defined as corroborating the evidence from various sources (Denzin, 1970; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). This was achieved through use of the various methods to obtain and analyze the data. "An increasing number of researchers are using multimethod approaches to achieve broader and often better results" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 373). For example, group interviewing was used to triangulate survey research

and, more recently, to triangulate participant observation (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 373).

In this study, as the interview data were collected and transcribed, they were returned to the person or group interviewed for clarification or verification. The goal was to make clear the meaning that the individuals and groups attached to the changes or events. The participants were the experts, and their approval or clarification added needed validity to the study.

Through participant observation, the researcher was in a maximized position for triangulating or cross-checking the results of interviews and interactions (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Inherently participant observation involved using several techniques for gathering data: researcher involvement, observations, interviews, and analysis of documents (McCall & Simmons, 1969).

Through ethnographic research, participants provided this researcher with reports of their beliefs and activities; however, these reports were verified using the collection of techniques available. Existing discrepancies between reports and/or participant observations were noted and addressed (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). "As a means of determining how people view and behave within their world, participant observation enables the researcher to verify that individuals are doing what they or the researcher thinks they are doing" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 110).

Various sources were sought in this study to provide the evidence required to recreate and portray events illuminating the changes which occurred at Farpoint Middle School over the last eighteen years. In addition, participants in the study acted as arbiters for reviewing the notes and interpretations made by the researcher, particularly during interviews.

"Misperceptions and misinterpretations" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 110) were corrected in a timely manner; this allowed the researcher to better meet a major goal of ethnographic study, that of understanding the meaning insiders attached to their world (Jorgensen, 1989). Persons providing information and serving as sources had an opportunity for review and comment prior to use of the data from their interviews. This provided additional opportunities to collect data, increased the reliability and validity of the study, and allowed for dispelling concerns of individuals related to their identification in the descriptive narrative.

Descriptive Narrative

Prior to writing, the data were first arranged chronologically. This process assisted the researcher in verifying the changes over time and in sequencing the events. The data were then clustered and arranged by issue and concept to assist the researcher in categorizing and finding the "fit" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 272) with relevant theory.

Events were discussed in this chapter from the perspective of the participants. The researcher attempted to reconstruct the way events unfolded and the meaning the participants placed on these events during the bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period from 1978 to 1996. Compiling an "analytic description" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 3) of events and roles was the emphasis of this section.

Data Analysis

Data collected from actual participant observation was written "in a narrative that is largely, if not wholly, descriptive" (Merriam, 1988, p. 140). Although the researcher did not attempt to be completely invisible in the descriptive narrative, nor claimed to be devoid of influence during data

interpretation, neither did she engage in "soul cleansing" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 372) while presenting the data.

The researcher used participant observation methods to devise an "analytic description" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 3) of the change processes at Farpoint Middle School. Such a description:

- (1) employs the concepts, propositions, and empirical generalizations of a body of scientific theory as the basic guides in analysis and reporting, (2) employs thorough and systematic collection, classification, and reporting of facts, and (3) generates new empirical generalizations (and perhaps concepts and propositions as well) based on these data. Thus, an analytic description is primarily an empirical application and modification of scientific theory rather than an efficient and powerful test of such a theory. (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 3)

The research was guided by the existing body of change theory research applicable to specific organizations, including schools. Patterns and categories were compiled from data collected and triangulated during the actual study. Finally, theoretical explanations were devised for the change processes studied. Therefore, this study applied, but modified existing change theory as a result of the ethnohistorical (Bjork, 1983; Schumacher, 1972) research.

During the "data reduction" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) phase of analysis, raw data from the field was subjected to a process of "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). In fact, a portion of this process called

"anticipatory data reduction" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) began earlier as the available change theory was explored in the literature.

In the end, this "data reduction" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) phase led to identification of emerging patterns in the data. As explained by LeCompte and Preissle (1993), the data collected was organized into rough categories by searching the information for notable regularities or patterns. Smith (1978) called attempts to categorize data "collapsing outlines" (p. 339). He added that initial efforts to give order to the data continuously needed to be revised "because the weight of the data and the developing ideas in the analysis are too much for the earlier formulated conceptual structure" (Smith, 1978, pp. 339-340). The goal was to begin making sense of the information as it would eventually relate to theory, existing and/or new.

Through this process, data concerning Farpoint Middle School's transition was systematically classified into "schema consisting of categories, themes, or types" (Merriam, 1988, p. 140). "The categories describe the data, but to some extent they also interpret the data" (Merriam, 1988, p. 140). The emerging patterns and "collapsing outline" (Smith, 1978, p. 339) eventually held their shape, crystallizing along three dimensions: "integrity, complexity, and creativity" (Smith, 1978, p. 340).

By integrity, I mean it has a theme, a thesis, a point of view.

The pieces fit together as an interrelated part-whole relationship. By complexity, I mean the outline has enough discriminable pieces to cover the major themes and the minor nuances, the large elements, and the nooks and crannies necessary to do justice to the system under study. Finally, by creativity, I mean the outline conveys some novel and

important ideas to some relevant audience--the people in the system, the educational research community, and/or some practitioner who is teaching, administering, or working in the educational community. (Smith, 1978, p. 340)

Development of the latter dimension, "creativity" (Smith, 1978, p. 340) was found as the researcher proceeded with ethnographic data analysis that was both inductive, meaning to "generate statements of relationships" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 247) and deductive, or to validate these "working statements of relationships in the field while developing a theory or hypothesis that is grounded in data" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 247).

During this study, comparing and contrasting chunks of data led to an understanding of the relationships between the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). "In all instances, we're trying to understand a phenomenon better by grouping and then conceptualizing objects that have similar patterns or characteristics" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 249). Through use of this inductive process, categories and concepts were further examined for relationships.

By the end of the "data reduction" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) phase, the researcher had devised a set of generalizations or "way of knowing" (Stake, 1988, p. 260) from the data and the descriptive narrative. These descriptions, which began at a concrete level, moved toward a more abstract level "using concepts to describe phenomena" (Merriam, 1988, p. 140). Eventually the researcher came "to know some things told, as if he or she had experienced them" (Stake, 1994, p. 240).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), another stage of data analysis was that of "conclusion drawing and verification" (p. 11). In this

phase, which also began early in the research process, the researcher continued to "decide what things mean" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). They added that early in the study "the competent researcher holds these conclusions lightly, maintaining openness and skepticism, but the conclusions are still there, inchoate and vague at first, then increasingly explicit and grounded" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). Smith (1978) called this "conscious searching" (p. 333). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) explained that this phase required that researchers "apply theory to their data, make interpretations based on metaphors and analogies, and synthesize their results with those of other researchers" (p. 267).

Accordingly, this researcher's search for meaning was constantly supported throughout the study by continued reading in the literature. Such an "interactive" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 18) action both assisted the researcher in understanding the factors leading to Farpoint Middle School's transition towards use of the middle school concept and further enhanced the development of more focused connections between the research study and the literature. These connections were used, in turn, to inform the data. Throughout this phase of data analysis, the researcher attempted to remain open to all possible explanations for the data available from the literature (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), interpretation of data was essential to data analysis. However, though it could be accomplished through "carefully reasoned arguments that develop inferences and establish connections beyond the limited scope of a study" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 268), interpretation demanded "a shift into different, more creative and divergent thinking styles" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 269). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) discussed interpretive techniques such as

"theoretical application" (p. 272), or a "systematic search for studies or analytic frames that fit the data more abstractly or generally" (p. 272) and "synthesis" (p. 277), or an interdisciplinary approach in which "researchers integrate data and concepts from multiple research efforts" (p. 276).

In this study of Farpoint Middle School's change processes, interpretation of data involved developing a new perspective on the existing change theory research. As Merriam (1988) explained, "when categories and their properties are reduced and refined and then linked together by tentative hypotheses, the analysis is moving toward the development of a theory to explain the data's meaning" (p. 146). This study examined available data and existing literature to find a "theoretical application" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 272) that "fit" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 272) the results. However, no single, previous research effort provided an all conclusive explanation. In addition, the "previous research" (Denzin, 1970, p. 55) utilized in this study drew on research from various fields such as the change theory found in business and science, as well as that of education. Therefore, "theoretical application" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 272) and "synthesis" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 276) were the primary data analysis techniques utilized.

Denzin (1970) commented that "problems and questions, not theory, create new perspectives" (p. 55). He concluded that the research act was a reflective process by which:

a series of tentative solutions, often expressed as propositions, begins to emerge. The examination of these leads to other predictions, new concepts, and renewed empirical activity. As observations in the empirical world confirm tentative

predictions, additional scope is added, and the relationships with previous research are discovered. (Denzin, 1970, p. 55)

Accordingly, the research act outlined in this study of one school's change processes over an extended period of time was based on "analytic description" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 3), utilized "theoretical application" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 272) and "synthesis" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 276), and was reflective (Denzin, 1970) in nature. As a result, it allowed the researcher to contribute to a new paradigm or perspective on change theory for educational organizations.

CHAPTER IV

Farpoint Middle School: The Story

Through utilization of participant observation and related techniques associated with qualitative research (Jorgensen, 1989), the researcher examined the change processes at Farpoint Middle School over a bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period from 1978 to 1996. The objectives were to provide a description of the changes from the viewpoint of those inside the school and to understand how the changes occurred there without district mandates to do so. Accordingly, individual and group interviews, participant observation opportunities, and document analyses provided the raw data. The existing literature, related to the area of organizational change, offered the framework upon which the following "analytic description" (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 3) was constructed.

Events, people, and outlooks changed noticeably at Farpoint Middle School over the eighteen school years from 1978-1979 to 1995-1996. The school moved from a fifth through eighth grade school, to one with fifth through seventh grades, and finally to another building housing sixth through eighth grades. The eighteen school years spanned part of the terms of two district superintendents and two school principals. According to Board of Education minutes, approximately 100 different teachers were employed at Farpoint Middle School during this period, with a yearly average faculty size of 27.

The time period was divided into four sections: the "early years" from 1978-1979 to 1982-1983, the "between years" from 1983-1984 to

1987-1988, the "middle years" from 1988-1989 to 1992-1993, and the "later years" from 1993-1994 to 1995-1996. Each section examined the changes that occurred during its school years and made the beginnings of an attempt to understand why these changes took place from the perspective of the people involved.

The "Early Years" as Farpoint Middle School
(1978-1979 to 1982-1983)

When a new principal steps in, a strange mixture of trepidation and hope surrounds a school. His rise from student teacher to teacher to assistant principal to principal, all in the same building, did not prevent any of these feelings from surfacing when a new principal was named for Deneb County Junior High School in 1978.

During the summer prior to the 1978-1979 school year, two items occupied this new principal's energies. First, the school needed 17 new teachers to replace those who had resigned, retired, or been non-renewed. This constituted about half of the teaching faculty and was a daunting task. "I think one of the biggest things that we had was that when I first became principal, I had to hire 17 new teachers" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 3, lines 28-29).

Second, the school needed a new image (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 7, line 6), "a fresh start on things" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 2, line 29). For years it had been called Deneb County Junior High School and was located in the Black community away from the only other two schools in the county: Farpoint Elementary School and Farpoint High School. With a new principal, a name change was in order. Just prior to the opening of school, its name was formally changed to Farpoint Middle School to be more in line with the other two schools (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96;

Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Foreshadowing the hands-on approach he would use for many years to come, the new principal physically helped to exchange the large, lighted signs in front of the school, the older one for the new.

However, though the words "middle school" replaced those of "junior high", the one concept would not replace the other for over a decade. In fact, years later the principal honestly informed one prospective teacher during an interview that Farpoint Middle School was still a middle school in name only (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). "At that time,. . . we were not a true middle school, we were far from it" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 2, lines 37-38). "I did not want to be a mirror image of a small high school. I wanted to do things a little bit differently than be a small high school, and you have to start with a first step" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 2, line 34-36).

Physically, the building was in good condition (BOE minutes, March 4, 1980). Buildings were typically well-maintained, as this was a priority under the superintendent at the time, according to BOE minutes. However, most of the classrooms opened onto an outside breezeway, and the office was cramped. Despite the South Georgia heat, no air conditioning was provided at first; this was rectified within a few years (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 10, lines 22-28). Little landscaping existed, and the playground consisted of three rough fields. The campus was surrounded by a chain link fence, complete with rolling gate to close off the parking lot at night.

During the early years as Farpoint Middle School, the building housed grades five through eight. The school was divided as far as structure: fifth and sixth graders were in a totally self-contained environment, like that of the elementary school from which they had come, and seventh and eighth

graders were in a departmentalized model like that of the high school to which they would soon go (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Students attended six different classes daily and received art, music, and physical education once a week each, with two ten-minute breaks daily. Furthermore, homerooms were arranged according to homogeneous achievement groups. Students remained in the same group throughout the day. This was an organizational plan used system wide, from kindergarten through eighth grade. Teachers met once each grading period to discuss any student moves that were warranted, either to a higher or lower group (Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

The faculty during those early years has been described as a staff in "dis-harmony, if that's a proper word" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 3, line 29). It was an older group of teachers:

Many of them had been there for a while. I can think of a few that had been there for a while at that point in time. A number of them had been on this earth for a while. They were, I'd say they were. . . within five years of retirement. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 2, lines 38-42)

During various interviews, the faculty was described as having to overcome several rapid administration changes, a very loose environment, and a lack of closeness (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Of the school and the new principal, one teacher commented:

School was so different then, you went in your room, you taught, at the end of the day you went home, to me there wasn't any conversing, or carrying on, or talking with each other, everybody was their own little individual thing. . . . I remember telling [him] that I came from a school that was very

close and that I felt like he needed to do something because we didn't get to see each other, there was no closeness. And that I didn't know what he should do, but I felt like something should be done. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 21, lines 32-34, 38-41)

More than once, the word negative was applied to the early staff at the newly named middle school. There was "a lot of negativism. Very negative. They were very open and outwardly negative" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 2, lines 27-29) at times. The principal also commented that, during the "early years," he had concerns about some people being so negative:

There were some people that if you give them a thousand dollars in one dollar bills, and if one is turned around backwards, they'll complain about the one that's turned around backwards rather than that thousand dollars they've just received. And that's just the way they are, whether it be at work or at home and I tried to talk to them about that. Some people, they're just ingrained. It's difficult to do. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 11, lines 7-12)

Those working with this staff during these early years have indicated that, as a group, the staff was "not inclined toward staff development. That is putting it nicely. The staff was not at that point in time, inclined toward much of anything that was cooperative" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 2, lines 16-19).

However, since turnover was an issue, the principal actively sought to improve the school through the hiring process:

There are advantages and disadvantages to that. He used that to his advantage. . . . He did use that definitely to his advantage in that he was able to mold a new feeling and a new climate, I think. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 3, lines 26, 29-31)

He promoted a more professional atmosphere as well, "about being a little sharper dressed, not trying to run you over at 8:00 and at 3:30" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 8, lines 4-5). This was reiterated by the comments of others:

I remember one thing that really bothered [the principal] so much about things to begin with, about how rude people were when people were presenting. Oh, they were, there's no question about it [It was] just something that he worked on. . . . The faculty that [he] started out with thought they knew it all, or they knew all they wanted to know. They really, of course, which, they weren't interested in doing anything different, they were opposed to any kind of change I think. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 4, lines 20- 23, 27, 32-35)

The principal explained his personal philosophy about professionalism and how it impacted on the school and the students, as well as the staff. "If the teachers don't act professional, how can you expect the kids to act any better, not that kids should wear a suit and tie, but that they should be a little classy acting" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 8, lines 4-5).

Apparently, Farpoint Middle School had no curriculum focus during the early years. As the principal explained, "the curriculum was focused, basically, on open up a textbook, take a test on it, turn the minimum

amount of grades in and go with it. There wasn't any focus" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 8, lines 14-15). A school wide emphasis was not mentioned until later. Then, the reading and writing programs were examined because some teachers recognized that not all students had the basic skills necessary for completing job applications and related information requests. As a consequence, more emphasis was placed on reading and writing. Students were encouraged to look at possible jobs through an event called Career Day. However, the fledgling attempts at curriculum improvement were hampered by the lack of a budget for the school. "I didn't really have any money to operate off of--zip! That was in the early years" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 9, lines 7-8). The only money available for school discretion was through the purchase of student pictures and money from the faculty concession machines.

While the school staff was undergoing a revision, the superintendent and principal were tinkering with the organizational plan of the school. First, the eighth grade was moved to the high school. While this allowed eighth graders access to the new vocational building and course offerings there, it was also a blessing for the middle school. According to the principal, "It's quite intimidating having that big of an age gap when you have a 10 year-old and a 16 year-old on the same campus, a lot of the times being outside together before school started. So you have people that are old enough to drive cars and people who are barely old enough to get out of the back seat of the car" together (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 3, lines 9-13).

Second, the self-contained teaching arrangement in fifth grade was altered. This began as an experiment when constraints were placed on the schedule by the half-time assistant principal position. A teacher and an assistant principal were asked to share two classes for a half day each

(Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 6, lines 21-26). The result was a half-and-half block that, according to the principal, appealed to staff members and administration alike (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Shortly afterward, the whole fifth grade was blocked, meaning that two teachers taught the same group of students for one-half day each. Sixth grade moved into a departmentalized situation to mirror that used in seventh grade.

Despite these changes, the area that most disturbed the new principal in the early years of Farpoint Middle School continued to be its image. Even now, fifteen years later, he still reacted with sadness while discussing this aspect of the school.

When I got there that's what it No one cared. No one gave a rip. It was just like, OK, let me sign in, do my thing, and sign out, and I'm out of here. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 9, lines 38-40)

He described the beliefs of some people in Farpoint that he would not remain in this new position for long:

I had bets from people in the community that I would be fired or wouldn't stay more than a couple of years. [A particular individual] even made comments to one of my best friends and said I would never last. I would be gone in a year or two.

(Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 10, lines 5-9)

The principal also explained the feeling among some in the community that children could attend Farpoint Elementary and Farpoint High safely, but in-between they needed to go to the local private school instead of Farpoint Middle School.

Changing the image became a personal point of pride with the new principal. He actively worked to promote the school in the community. "So

I set out and I did a lot of lobbying and told parents that while I'm at school, I'm going to look out for your child" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 7, line 24). He further explained that "people didn't know me" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 7, line 24), since he had moved to Farpoint when he married a life-long resident.

But they saw me at sporting events, they saw how I acted, and as far as having a genuine concern, and talking with the kids.

A lot of times an elementary kid does not see a man teacher until in high school, so I was kind of a novelty. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 7, line 24-27)

The efforts took visible form in the work of staff members and students to improve the looks of the school. The principal and some students planted shrubbery along the sidewalks and enlisted the help of a local garden club to do the same in front of the school. "We started making the school look good, we really did, we were very proud of it . . . and just people taking pride back into their community school again. Students, parents, and teachers." (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 10, lines 36-39). This point, that pride was necessary to improving the school image, was made several times in the interview. "We just wanted to take pride in our school, to let the public take pride in our school" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 9, line 25). The word "pride" remained associated with this principal in the years to follow (Woodrum, 1992).

Within three years of changing from Deneb County Junior High School to Farpoint Middle School, the principal felt that the school had made vast improvements. The community seemed to be more willing to support the school. "Instead of people disappearing and going to [the local private school] after elementary school, then maybe coming back in high school and

just bypassing middle school all together, we started keeping people together" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 7, lines 17-19) from elementary to middle through high school.

It was an additional three or four years, however, before the principal believed the faculty was mostly positive and approachable. While Board of Education minutes from March 1, 1983, indicate that 16 percent of the middle school teachers were either recommended with reservations or on probation for the following school year, by 1985, one-third or less of his original staff remained (BOE minutes, February 5, 1985). Major differences had occurred in this area. The principal "didn't pull in and bring in [prospective teachers] unless he thought they were conducive to working positively together as best he could determine" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 3, lines 28-29). By the end of the "early years," according to the principal, "I finally felt like I had a grasp on the staff as far as what I needed done" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 10, lines 41-42).

The "Between Years" as Farpoint Middle School (1983-1984 to 1987-1988)

During the mid to late 1980's, the county level focus shifted more toward curriculum and instruction. Maintenance of buildings was a continued priority in Board of Education meetings (BOE minutes), as evidenced by the new renovation project which contributed to the overall appearance and comfort of the school (BOE minutes, December 4, 1984; December 2, 1985). However, the Board emphasized curriculum, instruction, and staff development as well. This interest was verified through Board minutes from school year 1983-1984 to the present.

For example, a student council was started at Farpoint Middle School, and its fund raising project was mentioned in the Board of Education

minutes. While similar items had been mentioned previously related to the high school, this was a first for a student organization at the middle level (BOE minutes, December 4, 1984). In fact, with the exception of approving an eighth grade field trip in March of 1980 (BOE minutes, March 18, 1980), this was the first instance of any middle school instructional activity mentioned in the Board of Education minutes from the school years 1978-1979 to 1983-1984.

In addition, local curriculum guides were in the developmental stages (BOE minutes, June 7, 1983), and a system-wide Teacher of the Year was recognized for the first time (BOE minutes, October 2, 1984). Improving test scores was a county level, curriculum concern that was echoed at the middle school level. "I didn't see test scores rising, I saw stuff being stagnant" (Interview with Q, p. 23, lines 14-15). This concern translated into action; by June 4, 1985, the Board of Education "voted to write a letter to each principal and staff complimenting them on outstanding scores on CRT (Georgia's Criterion-Referenced Tests)" (BOE minutes).

While the State of Georgia required teachers to earn ten hours of continuing education credit every five years, the Board of Education in Deneb County had a more stringent policy. They required teachers to work toward a Master's Degree, and provided a county supplement that increased according to each higher degree earned. Though already in place, this policy was discussed and slightly amended three times from February 5, 1985 to September 8, 1986 (BOE minutes). The specific policy stated: All teachers in the Deneb County School System holding a PBT-4 or T-4 certificate must show proof/evidence of admission to graduate school and have taken a minimum of 5 hours before beginning duties for the next school year (BOE Policy GAD, prior to June 10, 1991). The amendments

generally concerned the other types and levels of certificates available, such as an Educational Specialist Degree. In short, this specific, county level requirement of continued education encouraged teachers to return to school, usually at the nearby university. In addition, it may have helped to influence the improvements made at the middle school during these "between years." Of the possible contributing factors toward changing the middle school, one individual stated:

I think one of the reasons is that we had a policy at that time where everybody in this county had to work on a master's degree, had to pursue a master's degree. And we had a number of people on that staff who were working on a master's degree. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 5, lines 1-2,12-18)

Inservice opportunities for staff had been encouraged for years in the county (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). However, this was even more the case during the "between years" than before. In 1986-1987, a staff development advisory committee was organized to allow teachers additional input into this process (BOE minutes, September 8, 1986). Furthermore, inservice opportunities were beginning to be more recognized by teachers at the middle school as a source of good information. Particularly notable were the positive comments of some of the original faculty members still remaining on staff at this time:

I think one thing that's been good is that they've offered within the county, well even out, they've given us the opportunities of classes that have shown us new and different ways.

(Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 24, lines 20-22)

Newly hired teachers also began to value these opportunities during the "between years." One teacher commented that by this time she thought the school was on the way toward becoming more progressive. When asked why she felt this way, she said, "Because they had inservice workshops for all of us to learn about the new-fangled things that were out in the world, in the educational world" (Interview with M, 1/23/96, p. 1, lines 19-20).

Together, the instructional emphasis at the county level, along with the specific improvements at the building level, were beginning to give Farpoint Middle School a more polished image. In fact, according to people inside and outside the school, a more positive, cooperative shift was made among the staff during these "between years." One description of the shift through 1987, included the following:

In terms of the staff, very cooperative. They worked together well, I thought. Just, they were a good group to work with, in terms of . . . or any other thing we happened to do. . . . From '77 to '87? It was like two different schools. . . . And I think the faculty at that time, at '87 and on, they were more interested in hearing what anybody had to say, they were more interested in learning. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 4, lines 12-14, 18, 31-32)

The staff as a whole was beginning to work together more and to have more input and communication, especially through use of lead teachers (Interview with M, 1/23/96). Instruction was becoming the focus, with more decisions being made that visibly addressed student needs. For example, one area that changed during the "between years" with an emphasis on students was that of grouping in activity or exploratory

classes. Up to this time, all students attended activity classes like physical education, art, and music in the same homogeneous group they were in all day. This plan was examined and changed, however:

I had petitioned [the superintendent] about the possibility of on these activity classes, which are now called exploratory classes, of mixing up the different . . . group levels. Instead of just A group going to PE, you had a mixture of A, B, C, D, and E groups going to PE, art and music. So we started out with one small step. It seemed to go well, we had less problems, even teachers mentioned that we had fewer problems that way. Plus, we had social interaction, it wasn't the stigma attached, oh, I'm better than you. Or I have better clothes than you do or whatever. So we started out with that. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 15, lines 5-12)

This shift from homogeneous to heterogeneous groups in activity classes during the "between years" was verified through interviews with teachers (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 11).

Similarly, a change in an annual event verified the progress toward a school-wide emphasis on instruction and students. In 1985, the Board of Education approved a Spring Festival to be held at Farpoint Middle School on a Saturday as a fund raising event for the school (BOE minutes, May 7, 1985). Booths and games were set up all along the sidewalk, in the lunchroom, and in classrooms to attract the children and the community. The focus was on fun and funds.

By the following school year, 1986-1987, many teachers were beginning to learn more about the writing process. The now annual Spring Festival was chosen as an opportunity for fun and fundraising, but also for

the publication of student writing. Each English teacher had his or her students draft, revise, and finalize a creative story or personal narrative. These were mounted on long sheets of colorful butcher paper and hung from specially installed wires on the brick walls bordering the walkways. The windy Saturday of Spring Festival, 1987, became a festive celebration of students' best work. Pictures from the scrapbook commemorating this event showed countless students, teachers and parents pausing to read and point out particular stories. Excerpts from the captions included:

Displaying student writing at Spring Festival, 1987, provided the perfect combination of maximum participation and supreme visibility. The atmosphere was noncompetitive; every student's paper received equal and enthusiastic treatment. The approval of friends and relatives highlighted the atmosphere of success and sharing. (Scrapbook of Spring Festival, 1987, p. 23)

In addition, the word pride was mentioned again as an important aspect of Farpoint Middle School: "parents and children shared tangible evidence of success; pride was literally as conspicuous as the 'handwriting on the wall'" (Scrapbook of Spring Festival, 1987, p. 19). Such a school-wide curricular emphasis, one that involved every student regardless of achievement group or exceptionality, was the beginning of a new focus on what was best for students at Farpoint Middle School.

Furthermore, near the end of the "between years," an event occurred that showed the staff at Farpoint Middle School was beginning to recognize that their students were unique and had different needs from those at the other two schools. Some staff members asked all Farpoint Middle School faculty members to complete a survey about the philosophy of education in Deneb County. Their survey was a self-designed instrument, and the results

were compiled in a paper for a class they were taking at the local university (LDR 856 paper, February 5, 1987). This paper explained that the existing philosophy was written collaboratively by county office personnel in the early 1970s and was applied to the whole county regardless of school or students' age levels. It was subsequently issued to each county employee at the beginning of each school year in his or her personnel handbook. Over 77% of the staff responded; the written summary included the following:

Overall, the majority of teachers at Farpoint Middle School feel our philosophy contains valuable objectives. Only a few feel our school is weak in incorporating these aspects into our curriculum. Thus, the relationship between the philosophy we hold and the curriculum we implement is evident. (LDR 856 paper, February 5, 1987, p. 2)

However, of greatest significance for the end of the "between years" and the beginning of the "middle years," the majority of Farpoint Middle School's teachers felt that each of the three schools in the system needed to "formulate a unique but related philosophy that would reflect the age levels, interests, and needs of its students" (LDR 856 paper, February 5, 1987, p. 3).

The "Middle Years" as Farpoint Middle School (1988-1989 to 1992-1993)

Introduction

By 1988-1989, Farpoint Middle School was primed to act on the new focus, one that emphasized the curriculum, the school as a family unit, and, increasingly, the unique needs of its students. The county itself was taking a more active interest in instruction. This was continued under the new superintendency, beginning January 1, 1989. Relevant to this focus, the

new superintendent commented, "We're here for those kids, they're not here for us, we're here for them" (Interview with V, 1/22/96, p. 6, lines 10-11). The Georgia Department of Education was beginning to encourage schools to move toward use of the middle school concept and published a set of middle school criteria (Georgia Department of Education, 1990). Concurrently, the local university was making a shift toward providing concentrated undergraduate and graduate instruction in the middle school concept. This concept was based on meeting "the developmental needs of young adolescents" (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989).

A Brief Order of Events

During the 1988-1989 and 1989-1990 school years combined, Farpoint Middle School gained 11 new staff members (BOE minutes, March 7, 1988 and June 11, 1990). In addition, several teachers were enrolled in the newly revamped middle grades masters program at the local university (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96). The principal was beginning to hear about the middle school concept from these teachers (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). As part of a course at the local university, four staff members gave middle school surveys to the whole faculty (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Each wrote a case study about the school in relation to the middle school concept (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96). They approached the principal about hiring their professor to speak at Farpoint Middle School, and did so with the principal's agreement and staff development funds (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

At a faculty meeting in May of 1990, the principal led the staff through a brainstorming session based on the nominal-group technique

(Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). As explained by Van de Ven and Delbecq (1971), this was a small to large group discussion through which a list of teacher requests was brainstormed and compiled. The resulting list showed the beginnings of faculty interest in specific aspects of the middle school concept (Teacher handout, 5/14/90). A meeting was held on May 15, 1990 to further discuss a move toward this concept for the following school year (Teacher survey, 5/16/90). Subsequently, distribution of a staff survey was carried out which asked for individual feedback about moving toward the blocked-schedule approach for the following year (Teacher survey, 5/16/90). The superintendent met with the staff to ask everyone about their level of commitment toward this concept (Interview with V, 1/22/96), and the Board of Education gave their formal permission to the principal's request to move in this direction (BOE minutes, June 11, 1990).

Over the summer of 1990, each staff member received a copy of Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21st Century (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989) to read (Interview with M, 1/23/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). During the 1990-1991 school year, each certified staff member visited a middle school in Georgia and information was shared school wide (Teacher handout, Spring, 1991). Block scheduling was added to 6th and 7th grades, and schedules were arranged so grade level teachers could have some common planning time. (Interview with K, 2/2/96; Interview with M, 1/23/96). A cooperative learning workshop was held over the summer of 1991, and during pre-planning a presentation was made by the teacher participants for the whole staff, including those in the lunchroom (Farpoint Middle School Self-Study

for Initial Accreditation, 1991-1992, p. 72). Farpoint Middle School began its initial SACS accreditation process, finishing it the following year (Farpoint Middle School Self-Study for Initial Accreditation, 1991-1992).

By the 1991-1992 school year, teachers helped devise their schedules in order to further emphasize a blocked, now teamed, approach (Farpoint Middle School Self-Study for Initial Accreditation, 1991-1992, p. 51). A school wide plan for positive reinforcement was implemented (Farpoint Middle School Self-Study for Initial Accreditation, 1991-1992, p. 71; Woodrum, 1992). Agenda meetings with team leaders and administrators replaced whole staff faculty meetings (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Though the school continued to use the professor's advice to "Go slow & Lie low" (Teacher survey, 5/16/90), Farpoint Middle School continued to work toward its goal of learning about and using the middle school concept.

Because the school did not meet state guidelines now in place for middle school grant money (Georgia Department of Education, 1990; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with V, 1/22/96) it sought SACS accreditation using the elementary school guidelines. However, one of the visiting committee members during the accreditation process was the State Coordinator for Middle Grades Education in grades five through eight. She wrote the committee's report on the school's "Design for Learning," which the committee approved. It included the following commendations: "The staff's effort to move toward a middle school concept reflects the commitment and concern about the individual learner. The school climate reflects a student centered instructional program" (Visiting Committee Report, May 10-12, 1992). The school's bid for SACS accreditation was approved in May of 1992 (Visiting Committee Report, May 10-12, 1992).

Prior to and during the 1992-1993 school year, the staff critically examined their grouping structure (Teacher handout, 5/14/90; Farpoint Middle School Self-Study for Initial Accreditation, 1991-1992). They recognized that continued and constant use of homogeneous groups was at odds with the middle school concept and were beginning to discuss its impact on their students (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). SACS recommendations encouraged that "every effort should be made to re-examine and revise ability grouping practices which interfere with the success and achievement of all students" (Visiting Committee Report, May 10-12, 1992, p. 5). Similarly, the Board of Education had been discussing a possible change in the current ability grouping practices as far back as 1989 (BOE minutes, May 8, 1989), though no action had been taken. By 1992-1993 the Board was under pressure from the Office of Civil Rights to heterogeneously group students in grades K-7.

On March 8, 1993 (BOE minutes) a group of middle faculty, administrators and teachers, responded to the superintendent's request for presentation of a proposal for the 1993-1994 school year. Each teacher in the group had prepared a portion of the presentation (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96); the teachers asked that Farpoint Middle School be allowed to continue heterogeneous grouping in exploratory classes and to begin in all social studies classes. "A Farpoint Middle School request for heterogeneous grouping in grades 5, 6, and 7, in all exploratory courses and social studies for the '93-'94 school year was approved, unanimous" (BOE minutes, April 12, 1993).

The Principal Factor

With a more positive school image and a more positive staff to back him, by 1988-1989 the principal was ready to focus more heavily on

curriculum and instruction. He had placed a teacher in the part-time position of curriculum assistant, the school had added a reading laboratory to assist students, and teachers had received training in the writing process (Teacher Data Sheets and Resume'). He had instigated block scheduling and teams throughout fifth grade, but sixth and seventh grade classes were departmentalized. However, under his direction, exploratory classes were heterogeneously grouped (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). In addition, in January, 1989, a new superintendent brought a heightened emphasis on curriculum and teacher input (Interview with M, 1/23/96).

Input at the school level was conducted by a one-on-one basis at the beginning of the "middle years." Some staff members explained that prior to this, neither county nor school level administration was as amenable to listening to teachers as they later became:

I felt like he had so much pressure on him from central office, that he probably would have gone to some things a lot quicker if he thought he would be allowed to do it. But I know every time he had one of those meetings he would come back, he'd be so uptight. Because it was just like, this is the way we will do it, we will not listen, blah blah. And it's not, I don't think it's that way anymore. . . . I don't feel the pressure that we did when we first came. We were under the hot spot, tremendous pressure. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 22, lines 20-24, 27-31, p. 23, lines 12-16, 19)

However, most agreed that the willingness of the administration to listen had improved with time:

I remember that what you had back in those days was, it was principal here and teachers here though. It was a big gap. And

I think today you feel more at ease talking with them and that makes a big difference. He can offer you ideas. . . . But anyway, he has mellowed. I think I've mellowed. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 22, lines 8, 17-22)

While in the beginning of these "middle years" some teachers referred to school leadership as authoritarian or dictatorial and curriculum as territorial (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96), teachers recalled that the principal really worked at getting more teacher input as time passed. "As the years, yes, I think [the principal] began to encourage more and more of input, And listened" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 22, lines 40-42). He began seeking input from every teacher. He distributed evaluation forms so teachers could assess both the school and its administration (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). Eventually, agenda meetings took the place of faculty meetings and input further increased (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/96).

After one of the visitations to other middle schools in 1991, Farpoint's principal borrowed an idea they saw called agenda meetings:

The principal up there. . . said he didn't hold faculty meetings, he just had agenda meetings. . . . They meet on Friday mornings, and he has a lead teacher from the specific grade levels, and they discuss things. And they type it up, and they issue it out to teacher mail boxes. And so, very rarely does he have faculty meetings because he tries to conduct business in a group of 10 people [rather] than in a group of 50 or 60 people. . . . We adopted that idea. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 20, lines 11-16)

The difficult thing for the principal was to step back and let the teachers conduct the meetings. However, teachers understood that there were times when his input was necessary. They added that "really the administration just sat back and tried not to have input" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 14, lines 11-12).

The first 2 or 3 times I tried agenda, I found myself running the meetings, and the principal doesn't need to run the meetings.

The agenda committee needs to select somebody to run the meetings, to take notes, plus type it up. And the principal needs to be there as a sounding board and as a participant, but not as a director. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 20, lines 16-20)

The agenda meeting format was implemented during 1991-1992 at Farpoint Middle School. Team leaders met over a light breakfast every Friday, prior to the beginning of the regular school day. Teachers added that "we'd discuss anything that needed to go on, we'd bring it from our team" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/96, p. 14, lines 5-6). If individual teachers needed to add an idea, they could put it in an agenda box in the lounge anonymously or they "could approach a team leader" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/96, p. 14, line 6).

As the staff considered the middle school concept, the principal reminded everyone that their guest speaker's advice had been to "Go slow & Lie low" (Teacher survey, 5/16/90). He conducted an activity based on Van de Ven and Delbecq's (1971) nominal-group technique in May of 1990 (Teacher handout, 5/14/90). The results of that brainstorming session helped everyone see their common priorities:

Here is the list that you worked on last Wednesday. . . . The ones that showed up in the different groups are noted with an *.

- * More cooperative teaching
- * Stable planning period everyday--common also!
- * Full time counselor
- * P.E. everyday--teachers not on duty.
- * Advisor/advisee
- * Heterogeneous grouping--except reading & math
- * In-service education about Middle school concept.
- * Team teaching--groups of 2 or 3 teachers.
- * Parent-community involvement.
- * More diverse exploratory courses
- * Interdisciplinary planning. (Teacher handout, 5/14/90)

The principal gave out surveys with questions and comments inviting teachers to give their honest thoughts about moving toward block-scheduling school wide for the 1990-1991 school year:

Do you feel that you would like to examine further the role of "Blocks" and what your role would be even if you were not involved in a block concept for next year? ***Be aware that the term Block will be used instead of Team. We are not going into the Team concept yet until we feel very comfortable.

(Teacher survey, 5/16/90)

Similarly, the survey ended with the following statement and the principal's signature:

As you know every journey begins with a first step. Please take the first step by talking with others about your concerns

and questions. If you need me, all you have to do is "Knock" on my door. I do not know all the answers but I am willing to roll up my sleeves and dig for the facts and hidden mysteries with you. Careful planning will involve all of you. Visits to other schools will be necessary throughout the school year. The approach "Go slow & Lie low" will be heeded. Your input will be considered on every decision that affects you and FMS.

(Teacher survey, 5/16/90)

Teachers, even those not particularly in favor of the move, stated that his approach made them feel more comfortable. "I think [the principal] just bent over backwards to try to make me feel better" (Interview with K, 2/2/96, p. 2, lines 33-34).

And, he acted on the input he received. For example, one of the items on the brainstormed list was the need for common planning time. "Well, we tried to do common planning time and we accommodated the teachers" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 18, line 15). Though it was not possible to provide the 85 minutes of uninterrupted, common planning time that recognized middle schools in the state were beginning to get, "we did give everybody about, I think, 45-50 minutes of common planning time" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 18, lines 18-19). In addition, the need for more staff development in the specific area of cooperative learning, a middle school instructional strategy, was passed on to the county office. Workshops were arranged for the upcoming summer (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96).

The principal admitted that he had no training in the middle school concept. His undergraduate and graduate experience, other than

administration, had been in the area of upper elementary (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). As a teacher commented:

He told me at my interview. . . that one of the first things I ever did as principal was to turn that sign from junior high to middle school, so he had the idea that middle school was better and that there was something called a middle school concept, but I don't think he really knew what it was. (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, pp. 7-8, lines 44-45, 1-2)

However, he made an effort to educate himself about the middle school concept after hearing teachers talk and ask about it.

I think he knew we were excited about it from going to [the local university] and working on our masters degrees. And when he started talking with Dr. R and Dr. T, who were authorities at [the local university], he realized that we were not just blowing smoke. . . . When he first started talking to those people is when I think he really started taking it seriously.

(Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 8, lines 3-7)

In the Summer of 1991, some of the staff members were involved in the middle school institute going on at the local university. Though it was an intensive two week course, they asked the principal to join them for a few days, to hear their professor, listen to some guest speakers, and share his own ideas about the middle school.

I remember having conversations with [the principal]. He had at least mildly mixed feelings about the changes that he obviously. . . could see would be necessary in his school environment at Farpoint Middle School if he were to buy into this whole middle school concept package. In theory, he

agreed with most everything. But practically speaking, as an administrator, he knew that you could only do a little bit at a time. . . . I believe at the end of the institute, he was a believer. And to the extent that he felt he was in a position to make changes, to support changes, he did that. (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 6, lines 9-16)

While each teacher visited at least one middle school during 1990-1991, the principal visited most of these. He also used Spring vacation days to visit two other schools, one in Florida and one in North Georgia (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Teachers discussed the difference this first-hand experience made in the principal:

It was like it gave him ownership and he became the expert after that. Exactly, he had knowledge. . . . Knowledge is power. . . . I think so too, I think the reason there was resistance in the beginning was lack of knowledge. (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 15, lines 7-8, 10, 11-12)

In addition, the principal sought support from those outside the school about the changes going on inside. He discussed the situation with those at the institute; "I spoke to them about what changes we were going through" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 19, line 34). They reiterated that going slowly and educating the community, the parents, was vital. "Don't wait 'til the first week before school starts, and this is what we're going to do. They have to have some idea in the forefront about what's going to happen" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 20, lines 4-5). According to the principal, the change efforts were supported by the parents, the county, and the local university.

Support from the Board of Education was evident when those at the school level were asked to prepare a proposal about the possibility of heterogeneous grouping. Teachers commented that the principal asked them if they would join him in making the presentation. A veteran teacher commented:

He would not force me to go, but he would like for them to hear my perspective since I had been in it in a different environment and it didn't seem to bother me that I accept change. Which I do, I've always tried. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 24, lines 5-7)

While the proposal made by the elementary school's administrator was turned down, that made by the teachers of Farpoint Middle School was accepted by the Board.

The principal's background was different from most of those living or working in Farpoint. He was from a military family and had grown up in the United States, as well as in several other countries around the world. "I feel that my father's military background, by us living in Japan and living in France, and then coming back to the States had a lot to do with things" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 12, lines 4-5). He added that this experience taught him about the variety of ideas available. While he was willing to listen to new ideas, as an administrator, he had also learned caution. He talked about being wary of people with new ideas that:

talk a good game, but they've never played it. . . . I think you need people who have been on the firing line. . . . I've learned, I've eaten my size 13 foot many a day, but I keep learning. Until a person proves me wrong for my trust in them, I trust that person. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 13, lines 23-24).

As several teachers explained, this carried over into his approach to personnel and their ideas:

We believed that he wanted to make the school better. . . . It is all in how you approach him. . . . You had to have your ducks in a row, too. Like I kept on telling ya'll, you have to make him think it is his idea. And that you're going to carry it out. I think you're right though . . . he was big hearted, wanted to do what was right for the kids, but he didn't always know the direction. He wasn't always open to change, because if it isn't broken why fix it; he wasn't always opposed to change, either. Right, but you had to have every i dotted and every t crossed, and show him from start to finish what change was going to be brought about and how it was going to affect everyone down the line. (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 7, lines 32-43)

The middle school concept was a new idea to Farpoint Middle School. Some of the teachers got the principal excited about it (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with M, 1/23/96; Interview with N, 2/5/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). He found that some of the teachers had learned from other places and were learning from their local university courses. "I had some new people come in that had some different ideas, and I was willing to listen to what they had to say" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 14, lines 33-34). The principal added that "they were excited about what they had learned at [the local university]. . . . They talked to me. They got me excited. But they introduced me to this other method of

thinking" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 22, lines 18, 21-22). He saw use of the middle school concept as a way to improve the school for everyone:

I wanted to do something for our kids and I wanted to do something for our teachers, so they wouldn't get so hum-drum and burned out. It's OK to have a routine, but . . . have some varied practices in it. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 23, lines 15-17)

In addition, he continued to be interested in building the image of the school and building pride in it:

I remember that he just got very fired up and he said he wanted Farpoint Middle School to be a showplace school, that people would come there to see an example of a good middle school. And I think that's significant when the principal sees the necessity and wants to change that much. Of course, the teachers did too. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 6, lines 15-19)

The principal added that he believed in the ability of one person to make a difference in a school. At first he seemed to rely exclusively on himself to improve things.

I still feel sometimes that it is a few people against the world. I felt that way when I took over the job at Deneb County Junior High School. I felt like other people were getting a fair shake and we were not I could do one of two things. I could sit down and moan, bemoan the fact of "Oh, poor me," or I could get off my butt and start to do something about it, and I chose the latter. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 12, lines 14-18)

More and more, however, he found that he could rely on others around him to make a difference.

I had fallen into one of the traps as far as trying to know everything and do everything, but I had people there that I felt I could trust . . . , and I let them do it, and it seems as though things seemed to take off. You do have to look out for people who want to put their own personal agenda ahead of the school's agenda. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 20, lines 25-28)

He added that "I have a lot of good people that make me look good because basically I let the people go in the right direction and go full blast, but not out of control" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 12, lines 36-37). He adds:

It takes a team effort to build things, but it takes a person to strike the match to make it work. So I feel as though I have been given credit for doing things, but basically what I have done is found the matches and every now and again lighted the right match to make things work. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 12, p. 26-29).

In short, the principal during the "middle years" saw himself as the supporter of the action, the one who capitalized on and channeled the energies of teachers so the momentum would build and the changes would succeed.

The Teacher Factor

Prior to the opening of the school year, 1988-1989, seven new staff members were hired (BOE minutes, March 7, 1988). Five of these teachers lived in a nearby town and commuted to Farpoint Middle School. Of these, three had previously taught in other places and had used aspects of the

middle school concept (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95). Some of the newer teachers commented about the difference between what they were used to from other places and what they found at Farpoint Middle School in 1988:

I had taught in another school for two years on a team of three where we basically did our own thing. I mean teachers had a lot of control in this [other] school. Things that were school wide, teachers were in control, things were student centered. I was amazed how much was already decided for us [here], when we would go to the library. . . . (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, pp. 2-3, lines 42-44, 1-2)

Two of the three were from other states, and one of these was married to the new Middle Grades/Secondary Department Chair at the local university. She was particularly knowledgeable about the middle school concept (Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

While these teachers did not previously know one another, they eventually formed a friendship. This circle widened to include others already employed at the school. Their personal link to the local university, through one teacher's husband, was also strengthened; several of them were taking courses at the time in the middle grades department (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96). As some of the teachers got more excited about the middle school concept, they found common bonds with others in the school. Small groups of individuals, particularly those enrolled in graduate coursework, met socially outside of school and discussed ways to help the school move toward the middle school concept (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95). The questions and comments they tossed around included: "What can we do?

What gripes us most? And how can we change it?" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 7, lines 28-30).

Eventually, several of the teachers involved in graduate classes spoke with the principal about moving the school toward the middle school concept. One recalled that they approached him twice, the first time in the Summer of 1989:

My feeling is that [we] took this course and [some of the others] came over and talked to [the principal] during the summer. And when they approached him about it, he was negative about it, the first time. . . . But during that year he changed his mind, and I thought it was the next year that we started it. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 2, lines 12-14, 19-20)

However, that first time, they were interested in starting with the "total middle grades concept for the next school year. . . . If he would not-- 'course he probably wouldn't go total--but at least to get started, . . . to start with the team concept" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 3, lines 21, 25-26). He turned down this first proposal.

The principal commented later that he felt teachers with new ideas should be listened to. He should "not throw cold water on their ideas, but to say, let me understand where you're coming from and if I haven't heard of an idea, then let me explore it further" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 14, 37-38). And some of the teachers eventually figured out that to approach the principal they had to have a specific plan in mind and a specific rationale. Ideas were carried out when they began to talk to him in detail about what they had in mind. These ideas were often related to specific curriculum items, such as seeking county funds and Board approval to

purchase supplemental reading books for students reading below grade level (BOE minutes, May 12, 1990). "Oh I think I was listened to. I really do, . . . those Quest books in reading class, that was a big deal" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 18, lines 44-45).

Later, in the Spring of 1990, some of the same teachers approached him again about hiring one of their professors from the middle school department as a consultant (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95). In an interview with some of these teachers, they expounded on this discussion, drawing on the memories of each other:

I do remember going in and sitting in his office, all three of us, there was safety in numbers, and we told him, you might not like what we're going to say, but this is how we feel, and we don't know the exact direction we need to take. We feel that we need someone who does know to come in and talk with us.

(Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 8, lines 20-24)

This time, they did not approach him with vague changes they thought were needed, and the response was different. Excerpts from a teacher handout dated May 7, 1990, signed by the principal, confirmed that he followed through with this idea and would be asking all teachers for their ideas:

This year we would again like to work toward needed improvements at FMS. However, we realize that first of all we need to improve on the process for getting your input. Every teacher needs the opportunity to voice his/her opinions about the direction he/she wants FMS to take for the future. In order to do this we would like to begin with the following:

(1) Listen to a renowned speaker who will give us some ideas about the direction in which other middle schools are heading

for the 90's. . . . On Tuesday, May 15 at 3:20 in our media center, [a professor] from [the local university] will share one hour's worth of his knowledge with us. . . . Please arrange your schedule to accommodate this unique opportunity.

(2) Participate in brainstorming and planning sessions beginning this Wednesday (May 9) to allow everyone a chance to share his/her ideas. In order to prepare for Wednesday, do some thinking between now and then about where you would like FMS to be in 5 years. Write a goal statement that explains how you would like this school to be in the school year 1994-1995. Then write an itemized list (in priority order) of 4 or 5 steps/changes/implementations that must be accomplished in order for your vision to become a reality. Please be ready to share this plan with a small group on Wednesday. (Teacher handout, 5/7/90)

The results of these sessions were evident over the course of the next year. In reference to the speaker, "I guess that's when I first started really getting down to brass tacks about what the middle school was about" (Interview with M, 1/23/96, p. 4, lines 13-14). The list of areas needing attention, developed during the session using brainstorming or nominal-group technique, as explained by Van de Ven and Delbecq (1971), became the blueprint that guided school improvement for several years (Teacher handouts, 5/14/90 and Spring of 1991).

Prior to the county's first curriculum fair, in the Spring of 1990, all teachers throughout the school were encouraged to work with their classes to design displays of student work (Curriculum Fair Committee Members, Memo, February 20, 1990). Some fifth grade teachers proceeded as usual

in their blocked situation, creating projects with students in teams and small groups. However, sixth and seventh grade teachers were still departmentalized, so two seventh grade teachers proposed that they mix their students in cooperative groups, across achievement levels, to design projects (Interview with A through C, 12/28/95). They utilized a multi-disciplined approach to teach research through reading, social studies, and English.

We sent letters home to parents informing them that there would be cross-grouping, that kids would be doing cooperative learning projects, that they would be working with students from other classes, and asked for parents' response, if there was a problem with this. We got all the letters back. . . . It was planned; we spent hours and hours on it, because we knew if this did not work, then anything else that the school tried. . . . And this was very much supported by administration. (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 9, line 1-5, 12-13)

However, at first these teachers found that some of their ideas, such as cooperative group work, were not understood by other teachers. "She didn't understand that cooperative learning takes place when they work on a problem that doesn't have a specific answer. She just saw it as doing something in a group, as opposed to learning something cooperatively" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 3, lines 30-31). They saw this, not as unwillingness to try something new, but as an indication that people there did not know how to do things differently. "People were really willing to do things, they were a little bit scared because it was new, and it was different. . . . They weren't sure that the administration would allow it.

Or 'we can't do that here' or. . . ." (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 3, lines 35-39).

Ideas like cooperative learning and cross-grouping involved a shift in philosophy and were carefully planned, with administrators kept informed.

They were just excited and enthused and seeing things that they wanted to try to do, and they knew that if they asked and could come up with a plan, that at that school level . . . , as long as it was allowable by system requirements, that they would be allowed to have input. And they felt free to do that, I think. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 6-7, lines 45, 1-3)

Successful attempts like those with the first curriculum fair helped build the confidence level of everyone to try new things with students (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/96). The idea of cooperative learning in small groups spread, with more interest generated about inservice opportunities available for all (Teacher handout, 5/14/90).

You don't ever have everybody on the band wagon at the same time. . . . But, when some of the teachers would try something different, let's say cooperative learning, . . . and some of the other teachers would see the success that they were having and yes, this does work . . . , they would come over to it. And the idea would spark with one or two teachers . . . and then would kind of spread through the staff. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 7, lines 15, 18-22)

Others concurred and brought up the idea of cooperative learning repeatedly as a strategy that became important school wide.

Fifth grade teachers, however, began to realize that what was starting to happen in sixth and seventh grades, in fact the talk of the middle school concept in general, was not very different from what they had been doing all along. "It wasn't that new" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 8, line 40). Fifth grade teachers "were already kind of teamed, and you had that teamingness, and it was acceptable for fifth. It was like sixth and seventh were mini-high school" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 9, lines 41-42). "I think smaller versions of this had gone on, in like fifth grade, it was kind of like we were two separate schools sort of" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 9, lines 33-34).

Teachers added that fifth grade had been blocked for a while. Organizationally, this gave them some advantages with the students. Because they each had only two groups of students, not six, the advantages included "more flexibility in planning" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 9, lines 1-2), getting to know both students and parents better, and the ease of establishing a common discipline plan with only one other teacher. Several teachers added that fifth grade almost had its own advisor/advisee program because of its organization. "We took that same group to lunch, we could sit down on the playground and chat after lunch" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 11, lines 8-9).

Because they were blocked, fifth grade teachers also had a closeness that other teachers did not. "Fifth grade was very different, being grouped together, we did things together, we shared" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 5, lines 41-42). Others added that "for some reason fifth grade always, they were close as teachers, and . . . , for some reason they always clicked" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 10, lines 22-23). They also talked about the influence of the

veteran teachers and how the younger teachers learned "what to do and how to do. . . . You're approach is everything." (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 19, lines 27, 35). Finally, one person summed it up by saying about fifth grade teachers that "they were a family when I was there" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 10, line 27).

With increased opportunity for input and discussion, comparisons began to be made between the grade levels. Teachers at sixth and seventh grade levels realized the fifth grade organization had some advantages that theirs did not. Flexible blocks were "a big plus in fifth grade, that sixth and seventh grade did not have" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 9, lines 8-9). "I think sixth and seventh wanted to be more like fifth grade" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 5, line 43). Some added that discussions about various concepts would come up during their university courses. During these discussions, sixth and seventh grade teachers expressed their desire to be able to use these new ideas, and fifth grade teachers repeatedly said, "Well, we kind of do that" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 5, line 45). About sixth and seventh grades, a teacher added:

And I think that's one thing that, when we all started talking about it and getting together. . . . We knew the discipline was suffering because of the way we were departmentalized. And we knew the kids were floundering because of the way we were departmentalized. And we felt like we could do a better job for the kids with middle school concepts, so I think we all just, it kind of mushroomed. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 9, lines 11-16)

At first, the teachers involved in trying to start new ideas felt the effects of some jealousy from some staff members. However, most teachers were beginning to realize "that genuinely our interest was for the kids" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 10, line 17). Others discovered that cooperative learning, for instance, was not an easier way to teach, but a way for the needs of the students to be better met in classrooms. It was for the students; "it was for their sake that we were saying to do these things, not to make it easier for ourselves. . . . It was hard to do these group activities, it is harder, more difficult, it is a lot more work" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 10, lines 17-18, 20-21). One teacher added, "I think that when people saw that and understood, then there was a lot of unity" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 10, line 22).

Other teachers recognized the efforts of those enrolled at the local university to share what they were learning about the middle school concept. This included sharing articles and "trying to make everyone aware of what the middle school concept really was all about. And the positive aspects of it, how it could make things better" (Interview with K, 2/2/96, p. 5, 32-33). The influence of this group of teachers was evident to others as well:

Some of them through their course work, . . . became involved and interested and realized maybe there were needs that were not being met for our students. And maybe they realized they really needed to focus on the needs of the middle school learner, and came back, and we talked and addressed them with administration. (Interview with group T through U, 1/23/96, p. 5, lines 40-44)

At Farpoint Middle School during the "middle years," a small group of teachers committed to the middle school concept "somehow found each other" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 6, line 34). They added that, while some of the ideas had been there before in one individual or another, there was "never the unity" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 6, line 38) that was present at this time. These teachers, in turn, found a widening circle of willing, open-minded colleagues to talk to. While time for sharing was a problem, "it was the willingness of the teachers who were there and had been there for years, to accept these ideas that were new to them" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 6, lines 30-31) that made the changes possible school wide.

Of the situation at Farpoint Middle School, one of the local university professors recalled that his perception at the time was that:

Teachers were subject centered folks, that was their mindset.

The schedule was departmentalized like a high school or traditional junior high. . . . It was a standard, departmentalized structure. But within that framework, and I don't remember their names, but there were people who were on fire for middle school. And in little ways, like working with one of their colleagues, they would try to integrate some curriculum, like social studies and language arts. There were individual teacher efforts to try to do that. That's my basic recollection.

(Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 6, lines 17-24)

However, teachers with new ideas had to learn how to share them to avoid alienating others. This skill, just like learning how to approach the administration, had to be learned. At first, some of the actions of the newer teachers were described by staff members as "extremely pushy"

(Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 22, line 39). Later, this problem was recognized by those with the new ideas: "I think now, I came on kind of strong when I first got there. And I regret that now" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 19, lines 1-2). One teacher added that it helped when "I sort of eased off on that and helped people discover . . . something instead of me telling them" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p.19, lines 4-5). In addition, one commented, "Just the fact that I had been somewhere else, . . . and let me tell you about my experience, instead of 'Oh, you should be doing it this way'. . . ." (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 19, lines 5-6) made a difference. One teacher said coming from another state was a positive in that she had some new ideas to share, but it was "also a negative, too. I was an outsider" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 19, line 8). Another added: "I was an outsider. I was told I was not a true Farpointian. . . . And that, you know, everything was status quo when I came and it would be OK when I left" (Interview with group A-C, 12/28/95, p. 18, lines 25, 27-28). However, this individual added that at first her ideas had not been accepted, though she felt these were accepted later.

Teachers explained that the changes at Farpoint Middle School were started by teachers. "I felt like it was the teachers that initiated the change though, because of the program at [local university]. We were excited about it" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 7, 31-34). Others added that teachers were responsible for "that push to begin with" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 7, line 38) because they were excited about the middle school concept. The origin of the changes was attributed to a small, informal core group of teachers supported by professors at the local university. It was "the right people at the right time,

in the right place" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 25, line 10). Of themselves, some of the core group added, "The core who started it were bound and determined, and hard-headed, and big-mouthed, and needed to be, as awful as maybe that sounds. . . . None of us could have done it by ourselves, or would have. . . . No way!" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 25, lines 13-18, 20).

The same individuals said of others in the school that it was "the willingness of those people" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 25, line 12) to make the changes that turned the attempts into action. Then, as the principal commented, "There was a group, those particular teachers . . . were excited about what they had learned at [the local university]. . . . They got me excited" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 22, lines 14, 18, 21). The principal added of one of the enthusiastic teachers who had been attending classes, "She was a catalyst, she was a go getter" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 22, line 43). Then, the principal started bringing in people to share information with the staff. The speaker from the local university, in particular, was crucial to other staff members who were not enrolled in school: "that's when it all started" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 5, line 5).

Others concurred about the importance of the teachers in the middle school's changes. "Their enthusiasm sort of facilitated that movement. . . . I don't know if [the principal] was as knowledgeable and enthused as they were at the on-set, if they just fired his enthusiasm for it" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 6, lines 22, 26-27). Another agreed and added, "I think you're right, the teachers started it but once he got fired up and got behind it the movement started faster" (Interview with group T

through U, 1/25/96, p. 6, lines 30-31). In coming up with the plan for the future, an individual commented:

I think they had freedom, and they felt they were given some of the responsibility, kind of like a site-based approach. They were given some responsibilities in developing where they were to go, and they were not being told from the top down. And I think that spurred the enthusiasm even further and that allowed them to move forward even more. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 7, lines 3-7)

Teachers agreed with this assessment of the situation; they commented repeatedly that their input was valued, that this gave them confidence to continue improving. One teacher said that "it just made us feel like we were not being dictated to, that was one of the first steps. . . . Dictatorship, no more, we are now a body, and we became a family" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 26, lines 20-22). The principal commented on the fact that people were able to work together during these "middle years" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96), referring specifically to the lead teachers on each team.

A teacher said that the move toward use of the middle school concept "wasn't just an administrative decision" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 16, line 12). They were not told "these are the changes that will be made next year and you adjust accordingly. It was something that we all brainstormed and said this works, this doesn't, let's try this" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 16, lines 12-14). Another added:

I still think that the thing that made it work was that the teachers liked it, the teachers got excited about it. . . . It came

from within. Yeah, and it was like we decided how we wanted to do it, it was like we put all the input in, and it was almost like this is a wad of clay here, and you mold it and make it.

(Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 17, lines 23-29).

While teachers said they felt like other teachers in other schools around them had change forced on them, this was not the case at Farpoint Middle School. This even applied to the county's response to federal pressure to change the grouping policy. "That was the year that elementary school was pushed into change, and we had been doing a lot of stuff already, we had just not gone to heterogeneous except in exploratory classes" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 11, lines 22-24). They added, "We realized how thankful we should have been, because they . . . were just told you've got to do it this way. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 17, lines 32-33). Others commented that nearby counties had handled their change from one form of grouping to another without input from teachers. "It was just such a sudden change, and they didn't have any input, they were just told" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 17, lines 40-41). For the middle school teachers, who had been allowed to have input, the important aspect was that "we felt like we had control in what was happening to us, and they didn't" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 18, lines 1-2).

Of the agenda meetings that began in 1990-1991, teachers said, "I think when it came to things teachers could decide, we would decide. And it would be our choice" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 14, lines 19-20). The importance of these weekly sessions was due to valued input and the chance for communication, even between grade levels. The agenda meetings were the correct forum for discussing situations with no

easy solutions and ideas that had to be thought about or tossed around in team meetings for several weeks. They were the forum for saying, "And remember last year we had a real problem with this, . . . and how can we make it work out better this year?" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/96, p. 14, lines 33-35).

Not every teacher was for the use of the middle school concept as soon as they heard about it. "I think there were some teachers, a couple of people, that were kind of against it" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 14, line 43). Teachers concurred though that this was basically because some "were not as comfortable with a particular area" (Interview with group D through L, p. 15, line 2). As everyone began to see the advantages in the middle school concept for the students and the school, their feelings became more positive.

Several staff members referred to the success story of one teacher in particular. She seemed to be their shining example of how one could have a change of feeling about the middle school concept, and they applauded her honesty during the "middle years" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96). Though she started out teaching fifth grade, she had moved to the seventh grade a few years before the middle school concept began being discussed. She loved a particular subject, felt it was her strength, and wanted to teach only this subject all day long.

As soon as I found out that if we went to the middle school concept, this mysterious thing that I didn't know about, that I was going to teach other 7th grade subjects, I began to get very frustrated, and anxious about it. Because I really did not have enough confidence in myself to feel that I could handle

other 7th grade subjects. (Interview with K, 2/2/96, p. 1, lines 15-19)

Another teacher corroborated this story by adding that this particular teacher was the first person she talked to about what she was learning in her course at the local university. "She was definitely against it because she wanted to teach [a particular subject] all day long. And she wanted it to stay that way" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 3, lines 36-37).

This teacher admitted that she had little knowledge about the middle school concept, or what it meant for students. She added that "as soon as I began working on my EDS program and really got into cooperative learning and, . . . seeing how all these changes could really benefit the students, I began to have a different attitude about it" (Interview with K, 2/2/96, p. 1, lines 35-37).

During the interview, she exclaimed that she was delighted with all aspects of the middle school concept, but remarked that:

It was just very difficult for me, but once I began to find out more about it . . . I liked it, and I think it's wonderful. I think it has really benefited the students tremendously. And it has helped me as a teacher because I've been able to grow and I feel like I could teach anything if I had to. (Interview with K, 2/2/96, p. 2, lines 1-4)

She pointed to benefits for teachers and students, such as the closeness that developed between teachers and students, teachers and teachers, by concentrating their efforts on fewer students for longer, more flexible blocks of time. "We all work together well. And we know what's going on with the children. We think of ways to help them" (Interview with K, 2/2/96, p. 5, lines 10-11). Another teacher added that through the middle school

concept, "I think everybody found out just how good they could be in other areas" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 15, line 8).

By the end of the "middle years," this same, formerly reluctant teacher embraced the middle school concept openly (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with K, 2/2/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). In 1993, she was among the staff members who went before the Board of Education to ask that Farpoint Middle School be allowed to heterogeneously group students in social studies. She did this knowing it would mean she would have to teach social studies each morning first period along with the rest of the teachers in the school. Furthermore, she was chosen as Teacher of the Year for Farpoint Middle School and, subsequently, for the whole county due to her contributions during the same school year, 1992-1993 (BOE minutes, September 13, 1993). As for the changes, she added that making them "was very hard. But it was the best thing that ever happened to us. So far" (Interview with K, 2/2/96, p. 5, line 36).

In addition to individual teachers, the staff as a whole changed during the "middle years." For instance, the first teacher of the year in the county was recognized by the Board of Education in 1984-1985. She was from Farpoint Elementary School, as were the next three. In 1988-1989, the county teacher of the year was from Farpoint High School. However, Farpoint Middle School's first county wide teacher of the year was recognized in the "middle years" (BOE minutes, October 9, 1989). This recognition occurred two more times for teachers at the school during the "middle years."

Similarly, the turnover rate that had begun at nearly 50 percent in 1978-1979 declined steadily, especially during the "middle years" (BOE minutes; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with Q,

1/9/96). In 1988-1989, the turnover rate was 20 percent, 12.1 percent the next year, and the turnover rate during 1990-1991 was 6 percent (Farpoint Middle School Self-study for Initial Accreditation, 1991-1992). By 1991-1992, almost 55 percent of the staff had completed degrees at the Master's level or higher (Farpoint Middle School Self-study for Initial Accreditation, 1991-1992). The principal commented that, of this period, he thought:

One thing we accomplished at the middle school is that instead of having 10 or 12 negative people, we cut it down to 2 or 3.

You're always going to have 2 or 3. The team, the people who are on the team, work together. If you had two strong links and one weak link, the strong links didn't let the one weak link fall, they held it together. (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 23-24, lines 43-45, 1-2)

Furthermore, the principal saw a difference in the focus of the school during the "middle years." The emphasis that had begun as no focus in the "early years" to a subject matter focus in the "between years," moved to a family unit focus in the "middle years" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). By 1992-1993, it had become a focus on the middle school concept and what the students needed most. Prior to the changes, "you had people that were there to teach and if the kids didn't get their subject matter, then so be it. The child's interests and welfare were not considered" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 14, lines 11-13). However, of the brainstorming session with Van de Ven and Delbecq's (1971) nominal-group technique in 1990 he said, "I think this was the first time where you could actually see a definite difference, . . . instead of what can the student do for me, what can we do for the student" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 18, lines 4-6). He clarified that this focus had always been there in some teachers' classes, but at that

point "you could see it faculty wide" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 18, line 10).

Others corroborated this view that the school changed during the "middle years." One individual, speaking of the whole school and not merely the fifth grade, added:

Well, and this does get to that point, but it seems to me that they became established as a family unit, and that's what they developed, they were small enough where they could work that way, once they became established as a family unit, then, they kind of got that bit out of the way, then they began focusing on the kids. And as they began looking at what the age student that they were serving needed at that time, then some of these other practices and research strategies, and everything became something that they wanted to check into. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 5, lines 4-10)

Another individual added that as the school staff changed and as they began looking at the middle school concept:

They got focused on the kids and what was good for the kids. And I really saw that. . . . They were willing to put in some extra time, stay after to attend staff development programs, I mean that school, for a number of years, has probably had, I know, there's no probably, percentage wise, the highest rate of attendance in staff development of any school in the system. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 17, lines 6-7,10-13)

Several of the teachers that were at Farpoint Middle School during the "early years" remained with the school through the "between" and "middle

years." Some of them participated in interviews and made several comments about change. One remarked, "Just because I'm older, doesn't mean I won't go with a newer concept" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 24, line 11). Another offered, "I think we do pretty good for old folks around here and change" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 24, line 13). Finally one veteran teacher summed up the school-wide focus of the "middle years":

I've always felt like we gain from some change, and we learn from our mistakes. You know, you have to sell me on it, . . . just because it's the new style doesn't mean that I'm going to go with it, but if it will help the child, yes, I will. (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 24, lines 15-18)

The shift, for the teachers, was now on developing the school as a family unit and on doing what was best for the students.

The County Factor

By the "middle years," some teachers commented that the "atmosphere in the county" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 23, line 26) was different. Teachers felt less threatened and more invited to participate in decisions. Their input was more actively sought, they felt more informed, and they felt more supported from the county level. A similar, but reciprocal, relationship was also encouraged from the school level to the county level.

Prior to the "middle years," teachers said they had "never been in a system that was this clamped down at that point" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 22, lines 35-36). They added that the county level had a "firm grip on everything" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 22, line 25), but that this had relaxed with time.

As this changed, opportunities for teacher input increased, both at the county and school levels. One teacher spoke of this as becoming increasingly progressive. She remembered that administrators were "trying to get the teachers' input on stuff, because I remember being on the superintendent's council. I went to those meetings too, to find out and kind of bridge the gap between the county office and the specific schools" (Interview with M, 1/23/96, p. 2, lines 1-5). She added that she felt well informed there about "things going on in the county and things coming from the state department" (Interview with M, 1/23/96, p. 2, lines 9-10), more than she did in another school system. Information reached her in a "more timely process" (Interview with M, 1/23/96, p. 2, line 11), because the system was small, but also because "I think maybe there were people who tried to get it down to the teachers too" (Interview with M, 1/23/96, p. 2, lines 16-17).

Those at the school during the "middle years" expressed that they felt their voices were listened to in the decisions that affected their school. Specifically, they pointed to the instances in which they were asked to give their input directly to the superintendent or the Board of Education. The first event occurred when the school staff requested to begin moving in the direction of the middle school concept (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96 Interview with V, 1/22/96).

The superintendent asked for a faculty meeting to be arranged at which he met with the teaching staff. "He asked point-blank to have the faculty meeting, and he wanted to know how my staff felt about going through the middle school concept" (Interview with Q, p.15, 33-34). The superintendent polled the staff members to determine their stance on the changes: "I think about 90 to 95 percent of the staff down there was in

favor of looking at the concepts, the middle school concepts" (Interview with V, 1/22/96, p. 4, lines 22-23). Of this event, some teachers commented that they felt they were listened to because the superintendent "came down and did polls" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 26, line 14), taking the time to ask to speak to them directly.

Later, during 1992-1993, the staff was asked for their input, this time as part of a presentation to the Board of Education. The issue was heterogeneous grouping, and the principal took a panel of teachers with him, each with a planned part in the program (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Referring to the Farpoint Middle School request to use heterogeneous grouping the following school year in all social studies classes, the principal said, "I had nine to eleven teachers present the information, we had a public forum there, and the board, after hearing that, voted to let us do the social studies" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 16, lines 13-14).

About the opportunities to provide county level input into decisions affecting the school, teachers responded positively. "They did invite us to go to the board, and do a presentation. They listened to us. And I don't think we'd have been allowed to go and do that years before that" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 23, lines 28-31). They added that "we felt like we were important enough to be asked, you know, that they were considering our feelings" (Interview with group D through L, p. 26, lines 10-11). The teachers commented that the outcome might have been different if the county had decreed that the school would have to use the middle school concepts: "You want it to be your idea, or at least have some input in what you do" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 25, line 25). The superintendent added, "those folks were looking at ways to improve themselves. Now, I'm not sure . . . whether it started with

administration or whether it started with staff. I know it didn't start here" (Interview with V, p. 4, lines 1, 4-6).

Other than allowing the changes to proceed, the county level supported the changes in additional ways. Money was available to be spent at the school level during the "middle years." Often, this money provided the means to purchase needed curriculum materials, particularly for needs identified by the school, a grade level or a team of teachers working cooperatively (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). In turn, materials were shared. Purchase of organizational assignment notebooks for each student and materials for a school-wide reading program were examples of cooperative purchases that further encouraged attention to student needs during the "middle years" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

In addition, staff development options were available that allowed Farpoint Middle School to obtain and finance the inservice opportunities they needed specific for their school. Prior to 1991, the county used input from the three schools to determine a school district emphasis for staff development. When the three schools were given an opportunity "to act as a separate entity" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 12, line 28), the staff development committee at Farpoint Middle School was ready. "They were the . . . ones that had a goal, or anything to work toward, or anything they wanted to do, without having to go back and start figuring" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 13, lines 6-7). This school's committee worked to write their own course and contact their own speakers and consultants.

Finally, the county level staff development guidelines, with its limitations on numbers of teachers able to leave school for inservice on the

same day, were set aside to support the changes going on at Farpoint Middle School. Of the resulting visitations to other middle schools, one person commented:

I think that was a big plus, the way that was handled. One thing, it allowed us to do something that probably was against our regular guidelines in our staff development policy. With the number of visitations and the number of folks being gone in a single day. We kind of broke some of those rules and made allowances. And I think the perception there was that if [the superintendent] were willing to make those allowances, then it was a worthy goal to work toward. And I think that encouraged them even more. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 7, lines 31-36)

Through concrete action, these allowances informed the staff that they were supported by the county level administration, "all the way from the top" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 7, line 41). The superintendent concurred, saying, "They approached me about visiting other schools. This was not a top-down decision" (Interview with V, 1/22/96, p. 3, lines 43-44).

In turn, those at Farpoint Middle School sought out county level support. The principal talked with individuals at the county office level to determine their feelings about moving toward the middle school concept. Later, he spoke with those at the county office about the school's ideas about heterogeneously grouping in social studies (Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Similarly, an individual at the county level commented that she now has a "better understanding about the nature of the middle school learner than I did because of some of the course work and sessions" (Interview with

group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 12, lines 11-12) she attended. Another added:

And of course, they wanted to involve [other administrators] because they wanted the support . . . , particularly the superintendent and the Board support because they needed that. We were always informed. I mean we were always invited. We always knew what was going on when they had an activity going on . . . , were invited to go with them to visit the schools. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 12, lines 22-26)

The school actively sought to build the support of county level administrators and involve them in the change process.

The State Factor

The influence of the State Department of Georgia on Farpoint Middle School's movement toward use of the middle school concept was indirect. Though the state was offering incentive grants for schools meeting the newly designed middle school criteria, Farpoint Middle School did not meet the grade level requirements for consideration (Georgia Department of Education, 1990). In addition, it did not have the amount of planning period time available to teachers on a daily basis specified by the criteria. Though the move toward the middle school concept was initiated at the school level, those involved needed and sought approval from the Board of Education. The publication of state criteria may have had some bearing on the county's acceptance of this direction, once chosen by the school. An individual commented:

One thing I guess was the availability, or the possibility of the availability, of the incentive grant itself, the funding for that.

Even though we're not there at this point, and we're not receiving the additional funding, I think that's kind of brought some of this to the forefront in that we probably were looking to . . . being able to receive it at some point. So I think that gave us some incentive to work toward this. (Interview with group T through U, 1/23/96, p. 9, lines 24-28)

The Regional Factor

At this time, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) sponsored an accreditation process for public schools and institutions of higher learning. When the principals, superintendent, and Board agreed for Farpoint Middle School to participate in this process for the first time, the criteria for elementary schools was used (BOE minutes, February 11, 1991). The criteria for the middle school process were, like those for the state's incentive grant, beyond the school's reach at the time.

The process started in 1990-1991 and was completed, successfully, the following year. However, staff members were divided as to the amount and type of influence this initial accreditation process had on the changes going on at Farpoint Middle School. Some believed it was mostly a paperwork process with little effect. "I worked on that thing. I think it was just a lot of busy, busy work. Paperwork. It scared us all to death, whether we'd pass it or not" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 25, lines 4-9). However, the same teachers conceded that the process might have "pointed out some stuff we already knew we wanted, or reinforced it or whatever" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 25, lines 17-18). The principal tended to support this view, saying that the process played a role, but "I won't say to what extent" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 17, line 3).

However, others were more vocal about what they saw as possible benefits that came out of working on the self-study. "I also think, I really do, that SACS had a big part in this. Because it made us look at our strengths, it made us set goals, short-term and long-term (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 22, lines 4-5). Others concurred, saying, "It might have forced [us] to look at some things that we had or hadn't done" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 25, line 11).

In addition, the closeness built and the communication enhanced through this process were mentioned as positives for the school. Of the self-study process, one said, "I think that had a lot to do with the communication, too" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 12, lines 11-12). Others agreed, saying, "It gives you a voice" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 22, line 6-7). The process itself and its mammoth amount of work, especially for a small staff, was also credited with bringing the staff closer together.

I just think that was one of the things that helped bring us even closer together. Because of the committees and serving and coming up with ideas and deciding what were our strengths, and deciding what were weaknesses in each area. And determining short-term goals and long-term goals. (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 22, lines 10-13)

Some teachers mentioned that the self-study helped influence the school's attitude toward heterogeneous grouping as the best thing for students. "I think the SACS study had a lot to do with the heterogeneous grouping. . . . We had already gone as far as we could go with it, but it fired us again to look at this ability group" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 12, lines 15, 17-18).

The general consensus was, though, that going through the accreditation process on a regional level with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools may have added some momentum to the movement they had already started at the school level. "I think it was coming about regardless of that. I really do. . . . I think we'd already made up our minds before that came about, I don't think it changed our views" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 25, lines 4, 13,15). Others added, "I think we were already moving the rest of it" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 12, line 16).

The Federal Factor

Early during the "middle years," the Board of Education began discussing the homogeneous grouping plan in place. However, action to change it did not occur county wide until the issue was forced through federal resolution by the Office of Civil Rights (BOE minutes, January 26, 1994). The superintendent explained that, while he was personally for heterogeneous grouping except in reading and math, "really, this was not a bottom-up thing, it was top-down thing. We were going to have to do something, or we were going to be made to do something. And that's the bottom line" (Interview with V, 1/22/96, p. 6, lines 18-20).

However, the staff at Farpoint Middle School, through the middle school concept, had been looking at the grouping possibilities for several years. They were without authority to change anything, however, except the grouping pattern in exploratory classes (Interview with V, 1/22/96). "They'd done some things on the middle school level, in breaking up these ability groups" (Interview with V, 1/22/96, p. 6, lines 24-25). Some middle school teachers were asked to make a presentation "to let the Board know,

hey, the world didn't come to an end when it happened" (Interview with V, 1/22/96, p. 6, lines 25-26).

When the decision was made by the Board of Education to allow heterogeneous grouping in all classes, this gave the middle school staff an opportunity.

They were prepared because they wanted it. They wanted the opportunity to try the heterogeneous grouping in subjects from what they said to us. It was not something we put upon them, it was something that the middle school concept advocated. And because of that . . . , it was not a grouping issue for them, it was a middle school concept issue, and I think that's the difference. And it was something that they wanted to try and they wanted to go into it slowly, they didn't want to jump whole hog into it. I know they would have willingly gone on into heterogeneously grouped classes for those courses.

(Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 16, lines 23-31)

This was verified by teacher interviews (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96).

The University Factor

In 1988, a new chair was hired for the Department of Middle Grades/Secondary Education at the local university. He began spearheading a move toward instruction in the middle school concept for undergraduates and graduates. 1988-1989 was "a transition time in terms of course offerings" (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 3, line 1).

By 1990, which is the year when this institution went through an NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) Review, . . . entire undergraduate and graduate

degree program(s) at the masters and EDS level for middle grades, were in place, fully approved, and established officially as programs in this department. (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 2, lines 37, 41-43)

Teachers reinforced this explanation of the changes at the local university (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96). Several pointed out that they had completed their Masters or Educational Specialist Degrees in the Summer of 1988, and where the middle school concept was concerned, "we hadn't heard anything of this" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 4, line 16). "The middle school concept wasn't something that was being taught at that time" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 4, line 4). However, teachers acknowledged that "after [the chair] came, they started doing more of this. . . . And that would have started about '89" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 4, lines 34-35).

A professor concurred with this statement, saying, "By '89, it was up and running. [The chair] had gotten all of the approvals through all of the curriculum committees through the institution right on up to the Board of Regents" (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 4, lines 10-12). He added that by 1990, "I moved into a series of MG courses that had been fully approved and in fact had been taught for at least a year" (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 3, lines 15-16).

Full approval of the middle grades courses at all levels included receipt of national accreditation, through close scrutiny and examination.

The NCATE Review is National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. . . . It is the premier, national accrediting agency for teacher education. Every one of our middle school programs, undergraduate and graduate, are fully NCATE

accredited. . . . The fact that we have it, at the very highest order of approval, is very telling about all of our programs, but as far as I'm concerned, especially about middle school. . . .

It's a very stringent review process by an independent team from other institutions from around the country. (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 7, lines 9-12, 14-15, 27-29)

In addition to the accreditation process, which showed approval of the new middle school process at the local university, professors sought to impact and influence the behavior of their students. This influential role, encouraged by documents like Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21st Century, was attempted through various methods (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). One was through a combination of courses designed to place students in an environment that expected them to function cooperatively with other graduate students (Interview with N, 2/5/96). This summer institute had an unusual approach to instruction:

What I tell people from the very beginning is what you're doing here, at a very basic level, is trying to get 10 graduate credits towards your degree. . . . But you've got to look at this more broadly. You are part of . . . a community of learners. Your responsibility is not only to yourself, but to this larger community. . . . I try to teach by providing an environment where participants can experience what it means to be in concert with colleagues and peers who are in middle school environments. . . . Regardless of the requirements, whether they are by group or by individual, all requirements are expected to be worked on as a team. . . . Don't go off and

work this alone, that's a no-no in the institute. This is a community of learners; you have something to share with these people. . . . You're part of a group here, and I expect you to behave in that light and share. (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 8, lines 5-20)

The principal of Farpoint Middle School, along with several staff members, participated in all or part of the first summer institute at the local university. The professor and the principal "hit it off" (Interview with N, 1/5/96, p. 10, line 40) after some of his teachers invited him to attend for a few days. The principal recalled that he shared information with other participants about how Farpoint Middle School was progressing toward use of the concept (Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

Similarly, the university's move toward instruction in the middle school concept may have had an impact on the public schools through its strong philosophy. According to the former acting chair, among the faculty, "there was no philosophical disagreement" (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 4, lines 29-30). Furthermore:

We were all singing the same tune. . . . very loudly, forcefully, fervently, with absolute conviction that this is the way middle grades environments, regardless of the grade structure, needed to be organized. (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 4, lines 30, 35-36)

In explaining this consistency, he added that the department took the opportunities that it had to influence its students seriously:

To the extent that graduate students take what they learn and are truly committed to changing programs in their schools for the better, it had a major effect . . . But the outcome of that

impact, we had no control over. We had all kinds of opportunity for influence and we consciously sought to influence every single graduate student to absolutely buy into the middle school concept. (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 4, lines 17-18, 26-29)

However, these statements are qualified by a clear understanding of the nature of change from a practical perspective.

What I have to do personally is to separate the intensity of my desire to see schools change from a clear understanding that the kind of change I seek is necessarily a slow and tedious process. So part of me says, I see the change, but it hasn't happened nearly quickly enough and it hasn't been established as firmly in the different schools I've seen as I think it needs to be. On the other hand, the other side of me says, recognizing how difficult and complex the change process is, and how it utterly depends on people, I think measurable progress is being made. (Interview with N, 2/5/96, p. 4-5, lines 40-45, 1-2)

In addition, the local university sought to support teachers as they moved toward the middle school concept through giving them a voice in publications. Specifically, an invitation was extended to those at the school to submit relevant writing for possible publication in the journal for Georgia's middle school organization. This journal was edited by professors in the middle grades department at the local university.

The "Later Years" as Farpoint Middle School (1993-1994 to 1995-1996)

In 1993-1994, Farpoint Middle School began grouping heterogeneously in its first daily academic class. Every teacher taught social

studies first period to a heterogeneously grouped class of students. Their experience with grouping this way in exploratory classes helped the teachers adjust quickly. "It worked very, very well" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 15, line 39). One teacher added, with others agreeing, "And that year, we found out how well everything clicked first period" (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96, p. 12, line 26). "They took that as the approach to start and see what the results would be and didn't find any real negative things about it" (Interview with V, 1/22/96, p. 6, lines 39-41). In January of 1994, the Board of Education voted unanimously "to comply with the OCR resolution to begin heterogeneous grouping in grades K-7 beginning with the 94-95 school year" (BOE minutes, January 26, 1994).

By 1994-1995, heterogeneous grouping was in place throughout the county. The middle school's principal of sixteen years moved to the elementary school to assist them in their first experience with heterogeneous grouping. Of the school's progress in the last sixteen years he said, "We've come from an abyss to the top of the mountain" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 25, line 29). The new principal was a former assistant principal and experienced teacher, at both the lower and upper elementary levels. "When I arrived at FMS, I must admit that I knew very little about the middle school concept, even though my major was upper elementary (4-8)" (Interview with S, 1/11/96, p. 2, lines 9-10). Of the situation during 1994-1995, the former principal commented that "they're doing fine. . . . And [the new principal] has embraced a lot of the ideas. . . . She's fine-tuned some things" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 25, lines 17, 19, 20). The new principal concurred by adding, "A lot of things that were put in place, we're just finding ways to make better" (Interview with S, 1/11/96, p. 2, lines 30-31).

In 1995-1996, Farpoint Middle School was relocated (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with V, 1/22/96). Like its former principal, it moved to the elementary school, or more specifically, to the elementary school's former location. Because of the state's grade alignment plan, money for building the new elementary school was contingent upon placing sixth through eighth grades together (Interview with V, 1/22/96). Therefore, fifth grade joined grades kindergarten through fourth. The middle school, now located adjacent to the high school, housed the grade configuration of six through eight. This placed it in the recognized grade range of a Georgia middle school, though other incentive grant criteria were not yet met (Interview with V, 1/22/96).

These two events, the move and the reconfiguration of grade levels, slowed the progress being made toward the middle school concept in some areas. Some of the plans made for improvement during the Spring of 1995, by the staff and their new principal, were put on hold (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96). Though the school staff developed a philosophy statement during its self-study in the "middle years," they still had not developed a mission statement. While this was discussed, it was one of the items that had not been formally addressed, even by the "later years" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95).

However, in other ways, progress was being made in spite of the upheaval of these two events. Since the Fall of 1994, the school hosted practicum students from the local university every quarter. This was a source of pride for those in the school and provided an important method for encouraging the continued relationship with the local university (Interview with S, 1/11/96). During the Summer of 1995, a school-wide meeting was held with teachers from all grade levels. "We met, and the teachers

themselves devised a school-wide discipline plan" (Interview with S, 1/11/96, p. 8, line 28). In addition, feedback from some parents the previous year led them to develop a homework plan for each grade level. The purpose was to avoid punishing lack of homework like other misbehaviors. The principal also made some expectations known to the teachers that she wanted each student's parents to be contacted in a positive way early in the year, each teacher "to observe two other teachers by a certain time" (Interview with S, 1/11/96, p. 8, line 42), and to write and teach one interdisciplinary unit by Spring of 1996.

In the end, movement toward the middle school concept was facilitated because of the two events, the change in grade levels and the relocation of the school. The grade level configuration increased the possibility that the school could qualify as a state-recognized middle school (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). Similarly, the close proximity of the middle and high schools now allowed some facilities and teachers to be shared more efficiently (Interview with V, 1/22/96).

During the study, tentative discussions and fact-finding sessions were being utilized to determine if and how the two schools could increase this mutually beneficial relationship (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). The principals and staff members from the two schools were devising a schedule using similar parameters that would allow both schools to capitalize on the resources available. "I do think it will allow them to do some of the things they've been wanting to do as far as some of the exploratories. . . . It will allow a lot of additional opportunities" (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 16, lines 15-16).

However, teachers and administrators alike conceded that the momentum built toward the middle school concept had temporarily lessened

(Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with S, 1/11/96; Interview with V, 1/22/96). While some mentioned the effort and energy that had gone into physically moving and integrating a new grade level, all continued to look toward the future for improvements on the middle school concept and meeting the needs of the students:

I think we had kind of gotten to a point where, with all of our transitions and everything, from school to school, and our change in grouping and all of that, we had a time that we've almost had to regroup and stand back and look at things and now . . . we're ready to move again. (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96, p. 15, lines 7-10)

Though almost all of the members of the core group of teachers so vital to the "middle years" had moved to other school systems by the "later years," the new principal discovered the leadership and initiative of a large percentage of the remaining staff. She credited them with the continuation of improvements and changes: "I think they don't get enough credit for the changes that have. . . come about" (Interview with S, 1/11/96, p. 3, lines 38-39). Optimism for the future was evident in discussions with various staff members (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with K, 2/5/96; Interview with S, 1/11/96). "We're still moving in the direction of the middle school concept; we're not there yet, but we desire to be" (Interview with S, 1/11/96, p. 2, lines 31-32).

Discussion of Findings

The process of change is a complex, non-linear one that depends upon the "combination of individuals and societal agencies that make a difference" (Fullan, 1993, p. 41). In this particular organization, Farpoint

Middle School, change was a slow, halting process that evolved over an extended period of time. In the "early years," the school was under a new name and a new principal, and it was "an abyss" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 25, line 29) with no focus and little moral purpose. From that point, through the "between years," the "middle years," and the "later years," the focus shifted toward "the top of the mountain" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 25, line 29), toward improving curriculum and instruction, utilizing the middle school concept, and meeting the needs of students. This "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) was created by a combination of external and internal factors, comprised of both individual and group efforts, that influenced the organization.

The External Factors Affecting the Shift

The majority of the external factors that affected Farpoint Middle School's move toward the middle school concept were neither direct nor intentional. They included influences from the federal government, a regional accreditation organization, the State Department of Education in Georgia, and both the local Board of Education and the staff of the office at the county level. However, the influence of the local university was both external and direct. Invited by a core group of individuals on the inside, the professors at the local university sought to support and assist the school as it moved in the direction of the middle school concept.

Federal influence in 1994 was felt heavily in the county. The Office of Civil Rights gave the local Board of Education in Deneb County little choice in enforcing a county-wide policy on heterogeneous grouping. However, the staff of Farpoint Middle School was responsive to this change. Some pointed out that the change in grouping was not a bottom-up decision, but one of federal resolution (Interview with V, 1/22/96). Others,

though, explained that flexible grouping to best meet the needs of students was a middle school concept (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). To the school, this was not so much a grouping issue, but a middle school concept issue (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). Since they had already embraced much of the middle school concept, this pressure from the federal level simply allowed the staff to continue moving forward in the same direction.

Regional influence also supported the changes at the middle school. With the approval of the Board of Education in 1991, Farpoint Middle School engaged in an accreditation process supervised regionally (BOE minutes, February 11, 1991). While some tended to discount the impact of the review process by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, others pointed out that it influenced the communication among staff members at the school (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Furthermore, the middle school concept, that was "already moving" forward (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 12, line 16), was reinforced at the school by this regional influence. The self-study process in particular required committees to submit their middle school ideas to examination, discussion, vote, and, finally, publication.

The influence of the State of Georgia's Department of Education was not directly felt by Farpoint Middle School as it moved toward use of the middle school concept. However, the state's publication of middle school criteria may have contributed to the acceptability of the middle school concept at the county level, once those at the school became interested in it. Due to its grade configuration, Farpoint Middle School did not qualify for the state incentive grants for recognized middle schools. Therefore, despite

the state's encouragement, the county never pushed the school toward use of the middle school concept.

In the "later years," after Farpoint Middle School had accepted the middle school concept as its tenet, however, the state did have a direct, external influence. When the county needed state funds for building a new elementary school, it had to match the state's grade alignment plan. This called for grades six through eight to be together (Interview with V, 1/22/96). Therefore, as the new elementary building was completed, fifth grade moved to the new school and eighth grade returned to the middle school. The middle school, for the first time, contained only grades six through eight.

County level support particularly assisted the school's move toward use of the middle school concept. This included an increase in the opportunities for teachers to give input into the county level decision-making process, even to the point of teachers being asked for their vote for or against pursuing the middle school concept in their school (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with V, 1/22/96). Once approved, the changes continued to be supported by the county level, which provided funds for inservices, visitations, and resource materials (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96).

In 1991, the staff development committee at the middle school began taking advantage of an opportunity extended by the county for its staff to plan specific inservices to better meet the school's particular needs (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). In an attempt at reciprocity, the school staff kept the county level informed of their ideas and worked to help county personnel learn more about the middle school concept (Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

Finally, the county's policy, which required pursuit of a Master's degree, encouraged teachers to take advantage of the opportunities available through the local university. Therefore, the local university, as it added a program emphasizing the middle school concept, had an opportunity to directly impact upon some of the faculty at Farpoint Middle School. Over the course of the interviews, this point was made clear: the middle grades department at the local university had a dramatic impact on the changes that occurred at Farpoint Middle School (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with K, 2/2/96; Interview with N, 2/5/96; Interview with S, 1/11/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

In addition, the local university provided support for the changes that occurred. A speaker from the university was hired by the school, at teacher request, to explain the middle school concept to the staff in general. Some of the recommendations for visitations of various schools came directly from professors (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96). Professors at the local university formed informal relationships with teachers and administration at the school, discussing possibilities for better meeting the needs of students (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with N, 2/5/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). The influence of the local university was invited, as a supportive resource, initiated by teachers and joined by administrators.

The Internal Factors Affecting the Shift

The internal influences of change developed inside the school over a long period of time. Early on, the principal's emphasis was on building the best school possible despite the constraints imposed upon him. During the "early" and "between" years, the constraints consisted of a negative staff

and the school's negative image. As a result, the focus of the leader was to turn these into positives by working from the inside. By the end of the "between years," the school was ready for a new paradigm.

The key players during the "middle years" were a small, informal group or core of teachers, the long-term principal, and, eventually, the whole staff. A core group of teachers, made up of those new to the school with middle school backgrounds and those enrolled in middle school courses at the local university, met socially and sought to influence the principal and the school toward accepting the middle school concept. They reached out to the county and the local university to find resources to assist them. They channeled the enthusiasm of the principal into action that led to the involvement of all staff members. The important role of these teachers in changing the school, particularly through their contact with the local university, was a point made repeatedly during interviews (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96; Interview with N, 2/5/96; Interview with S, 1/11/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

The principal wanted to improve the school; the teachers wanted to improve the school. While the principal listened to the core group inside and the resources they invited from outside, the staff as a group listened to him. Then, teachers began listening to each other through faculty-wide activities and discussions. With support from the county and local university, the staff made themselves into a "community of learners" (Barth, 1984, p. 94) and helped their school begin to develop into a "learning organization" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4).

During the "middle years," the individuals and total staff of Farpoint Middle School learned, shared, and developed the change agency skills

necessary to make the shift a reality. Beginning with a few individuals, they eventually made their collective moral purpose known: to meet the needs of the students at the middle level. Subsequently, a "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) was made toward use of the middle school concept to more thoroughly meet the needs of the students. The next principal and the staff of the "later years" kept these middle school changes alive and "fine-tuned" them (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 25, line 20), continuing to find ways to address the needs of students.

Summary

The bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period from 1978 to 1996 was one of change and transition for Farpoint Middle School. This study attempted to describe analytically the change processes in this particular time and place. The events, roles, and influencing factors were evident from the raw data collected during participant observation, individual and group interviews, and document analyses. Though arranged chronologically according to four time segments within the eighteen years, the data from the "middle years" (1988-1993) were specifically framed around the constructs found in the review of change theory available in the literature. This allowed the researcher to begin to visualize how the events, roles, and various factors interacted and led to changes in the school over an extended period of time.

The major findings of this study provided an outline of change and transition bridging a span of eighteen years. A "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) among the staff was supported from outside the school by federal, regional, state, and school district factors. In addition, teachers inside the school sought help from professors in making the transition, thus

bridging the distance between the internal organization of the middle school and the external organization of the local university.

Within the school, the major players were the principal, a small group of teachers, the principal and these teachers, and finally, the whole staff. Together, the staff worked to become a "community of learners and leaders" (Barth, 1990, p. 121) in a "learning organization" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4). The moral purposes of individuals with change agency skills (Fullan, 1993) provided the direction and capacity to ensure the success of the "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) toward meeting the needs of the students at Farpoint Middle School.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was an ethnohistorical study of one school, Farpoint Middle School in rural Georgia. It examined the changes that occurred there over a bounded (Stake, 1988) eighteen-year period from 1978 to 1996. The study sought to understand and describe the changes that took place and to enumerate the internal and external factors that influenced them. Therefore, this descriptive study utilized techniques relevant to qualitative research in order to uncover the meaning that participants in the school gave to the roles, events, and changes that took place at Farpoint Middle School.

The study was carried out through a variety of methods, including use of participant observation, conduct of individual and group interviews, and analysis of available documents. The first phase of participant observation was carried out from 1982 to 1992, when the researcher was a participant in the school as teacher and administrator. This gave the researcher an inside view of events, roles, and the meanings attached to the changes taking place. In the second phase, from 1995 to 1996, the researcher was a participant observer in events relevant to the school. Moderately-scheduled, individual and group interviews were utilized (Bjork, 1983; Stewart & Cash, 1982). Respondents were selected based on the time period of their experience with the school and propensity for discussing analytically the events, roles, and changes during those years.

Documentation gathered included handouts, memos, publications, and minutes from Board of Education meetings.

Use of the qualitative techniques uncovered a preponderance of evidence that the changes at the school occurred over a long period of time. Through early efforts led by the principal, the school's staff and its image became more positive; the closeness of the staff increased as well. These improvements took place over a ten-year period, during the "early" and "between years," and were accompanied by a county-wide shift toward emphasis on curriculum and instruction. During the "middle years," a small, informal core of teachers began meeting socially away from school. These teachers were either newly hired from outside the school, or they brought in new ideas from an external source, the local university. Drawing on both their individual and collective moral purposes, and using their change agency skills, these teachers influenced the direction of the school. This was accomplished by involving the principal, who immediately included all teachers on staff. Together, the staff as a whole established a moral purpose for the school; this included use of the middle school concept to help them better meet the needs of their students and development of the change agency skills needed to work toward its use.

Continued external support from the region, county, and local university assisted the move. Pressure on the county from state and federal forces actually pushed in the same direction as the changes taking place inside the school. These factors only enhanced the movement toward the middle school concept and the capacity of the school for meeting the needs of the students. The shift going on inside the school made the ramifications of these pressures acceptable to those inside. Eventually, the shift created changes in some structural aspects of the school, and the staff began

learning new strategies for moving toward their goal. Despite a change in leadership, attrition of almost all of the original core group, and physical relocation of the school, Farpoint Middle School continued to advance toward use of the middle school concept to better meet the needs of its students during the "later years."

Conclusions

The changes at Farpoint Middle School took place over an extended period of time; they were initiated from the inside and supported, not pushed, by external forces on the periphery of the organization. The key external supporters were the county and the local university. An informal core of teachers, or "paradigm shifters," (Barker, 1992, p. 54) worked with professors at the local university to provide a "bridge" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7) between the external environment and the internal changes these teachers were seeking. This group sought to involve the principal, the "paradigm pioneer," (Barker, 1992, p. 71) who in turn, included the rest of the staff. The changes continued even into the "later years."

Changes that substantially affected the work and content of organizations, not merely the structure, were difficult and complicated to achieve (Cuban, 1988; Sarason, 1990). Barker (1992) pointed out that "paradigm paralysis" (p. 155) easily stagnates the organization and prevents change from occurring. This belief, that only a single way of doing things is possible, is the opposite of "paradigm pliancy" (Barker, 1992, p. 156). The latter is preferable for making change possible; it is an attitude that requires careful "cultivation" (Barker, 1992, p. 157) in the organization.

Similarly, Kuhn (1970) emphasized the time required to change from one "time-honored" (p. 6) way of thinking to another in the field of science, saying that one paradigm served for "succeeding generations of

practitioners" (p. 10) before giving way to another. At Farpoint Middle School, the changes took place over a long period of time and were highly complicated and convoluted. The attitude of "paradigm paralysis" (Barker, 1992, p. 155) required years to give way to one of open-minded, "paradigm pliancy" (Barker, 1992, p. 156).

Unlike the planned change emphasized by organization development (Schmuck & Runkel, 1985), Fullan (1993) indicated that change is non-linear. The latter was the case at Farpoint Middle School; the changes did not flow from planned step to planned step. The changes evolved. They were neither carefully mapped out, nor rigidly conceived. Fullan (1993) added that the forces of change cannot be controlled; they are "ubiquitous and relentless" (p. vii). The movement toward the desired changes at Farpoint Middle School was neither sequential nor linear. The path of the evolution was visible only in hindsight.

Accordingly, no master plan of action existed at Farpoint Middle School that mandated change from the top-down. Such a plan, if it had existed, may have been meaningless; the concept of top-down, enforced change is not typically successful in creating substantive change (Hord et al., 1987; Owens, 1991; Sarason, 1990). Instead, the changes were initiated from inside the organization, beginning early on with the principal's goals, then with those of a small group of teachers, and finally using the goals of the total staff. This situation had recent support in the literature. Through organization self-renewal, Schmuck and Runkel (1985) explained that change cannot be imposed from the outside. Rather, the school's culture must support the attitude that change can, and in fact, needs to come from the inside. Fullan (1993) added that complex change cannot be

mandated; "people do not and cannot change by being told to do so" (p. 24).

Similarly, the school's "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) did not take shape until those inside the prevailing paradigm began looking toward the new one as a way to solve current problems and better meet the needs of their students. This was a slow, painful process, as evidenced by teacher responses (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with K, 2/2/96). As Barker (1992) pointed out, the "paradigm effect" (p. 86) keeps people from seeing the same situation in a new way, just as an optical illusion can be visualized in various ways from different perspectives. Making the change from one perspective to the other is very difficult.

Most of the teachers in the school during "the middle years" were positive and willing to learn new ways to meet the needs of the students (Interview with T and U, 1/25/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96). Yet, at first, some of these same teachers were unable to adopt a new way of perceiving their roles. They were not just resistant to change or unwilling to change; their feelings were commensurate with the "paradigm effect" (Barker, 1992, p. 86). Teachers were unable to trade one paradigm for another simply because others wanted them to do so. Each individual, before accepting the shift, had to personally understand and believe that the new paradigm would better solve some of their existing problems in meeting the needs of students (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with K, 2/2/96). Similarly, Fullan (1993) cautioned against forgetting the importance of the individual in change. He validated the need for the group to hear the voice of the individual, almost as its conscience:

Group-suppression or self-suppression of intuition and experiential knowledge is one of the major reasons why bandwagons and ill-conceived innovations flourish (and then inevitably fade, giving change a bad name.) It is for this reason that I see the individual as an under-valued source of reform. (Fullan, 1993, p. 35)

Opportunities for input allowed every individual to express his or her moral purpose, contribute toward developing the school's purpose, and enhance his or her own change agency skills of "personal vision-building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration" (Fullan, 1993, p. 12). Along the way, a "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) occurred within the individuals, and eventually the whole school, toward use of the middle school concept and meeting the needs of the students. This shift, and the people engaged in it on the inside, eventually affected the structure of the school. Unknowingly, the adults began to develop a "community of learners" (Barth, 1984, p. 94) with student learning and student needs as the emphases. In the "later years" they continued to progress toward building a future "learning organization" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4).

By the beginning of the self-study conducted in 1991-1992, teachers had opportunity to work together and discuss their individual moral purposes. Fullan (1993) advocated the view that each individual in an organization should be a change agent, particularly one with moral purpose. "Each and every teacher has the responsibility to help create an organization capable of individual and collective inquiry and continuous renewal, or it will not happen" (Fullan, 1993, p. 39).

In addition, teachers began to contribute cooperatively to the articulation of a single philosophy for the school. Rosenholtz (1989)

concurred with the importance of developing a school wide "vision" (p. 39). In "high consensus schools," (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 38) teachers collaborated to explain a set of "shared goals, beliefs, and values" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 39) by talking themselves toward a "more ennobling vision that placed teaching issues and children's interests in the forefront, and that bound them, including newcomers, to pursue that same vision" (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 39). Such collaboration, according to Fullan (1993), was the fourth capacity of change agency.

Yet, by the "later years," Farpoint Middle School's staff had not completely devised a formal vision statement. Instead, they had determined a common direction through action and interaction, all prior to committing themselves to any statement of collective moral purpose. Similarly, Fullan (1993) explained that, despite the importance of continued collaboration toward a general direction, "vision and strategic planning come later" (p. 28).

In trying to move closer toward the middle school concept, the faculty at Farpoint Middle School found that some of their existing structures, such as departmentalization, faculty meetings, and homogeneous grouping, did not allow them to best meet the needs of their middle school learners. Each of these structures eventually gave way to other structures. For example, the homogeneous grouping pattern was beyond the control of the internal environment and was mandated from the top-down by the county. However, by the end of the "middle years," the Board of Education was under pressure from another external agency at the federal level to change it (BOE minutes, Mar. 8, 1993). In this instance, the new paradigm already accepted at the school eased the external decision. Input from the school level to personnel at the county level helped make the change to

heterogeneous grouping more palatable to all (Interview with group T and U, 1/25/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96; Interview with V, 1/22/96).

Thus, structures in and around the school were altered through the influence of the new paradigm. As Beer et al. (1990) and Fullan (1994) found, the structural revisions were not dictated first in order to create a substantial change in the organization. Conversely, substantive changes led to structural changes. Sarason (1990) concurred with this assessment of organizational shifts by acknowledging that change in one part of the system led to other changes. "What is crucial is to decide which of these problems should be a starting point, because if one deals successfully, even in part, with that problem, changes elsewhere in the system are likely to occur over time" (Sarason, 1990, p. 27).

Fullan (1993) explained that problems are necessary for learning and changing. Barker (1992) concurred by adding that "paradigm shifts" (p. 37) take place because the old paradigm, which solved a set of problems, created a new set. In seeking solutions to the new set of problems, the shift toward another set of rules and solutions, and consequently another set of problems, is facilitated. For Fullan (1993), this process emphasized the need for two of his four change agency skills, inquiry and mastery. Similarly, Barker (1992) cautioned that people inside the organization must both seek and be receptive to the new paradigm, or the change will not occur.

During the "middle years," a small core group of teachers met socially and addressed the problems they saw in the school's existing situation. As they sought solutions to the problems of the existing paradigm, they took on a change agent role. Barker (1992) called this role that of "paradigm

shifter" (p. 54). The core group at Farpoint Middle School was composed of two categories of "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54).

One category was made up of those who came from outside the organization to work inside it. While new teachers were employed by the school every year, in 1988-1989 several teachers were hired that had experience with the middle school concept in other places (BOE minutes, March 7, 1988; Interview with Q, 1/9/96; Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95). Their external and separate, though similar experiences provided a platform on which to develop internal problem-solving.

These new individuals had some of the characteristics of Barker's (1992) description of the "paradigm shifter" (p. 54) category called the "tinkerer" (p. 64). They came to the school not knowing of its existing paradigm and, once inside, tried to make changes so the school would fit their own way of looking at things. According to Barker (1992), the response to the outsider was usually harsh: "Who do they think they are? . . . We don't do things that way around here" (p. 56), because the people inside have not yet recognized that the proposed changes would address some of the problems they were currently experiencing inside.

At Farpoint Middle School, this was the case at first. The differences between the perspective of the "tinkerers" (Barker, 1992, p. 64) and that of those inside the school were many and could not be quickly reconciled. Before moving on to other school systems, and though they may not have realized it at the time, these "tinkerers" (Barker, 1992, p. 64) did make a difference. However, they did not make a difference alone.

The other category of "paradigm shifter" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) in the group was made up of individuals already inside the school. Some of these individuals closely resembled the rare category called the "maverick"

(Barker, 1992, p. 63) because they operated from inside the school and knew its existing paradigm, but were searching actively for additional answers to the problems they saw. According to Barker (1992), the "maverick" (p. 63) had the advantage over the "tinkerer" (p. 64) of credibility, because "they are knowledgeable about the paradigm but not captured by it" (p. 64). They often had to be "rule breakers at crucial junctures" (Barker, 1992, p. 64). Connor and Lake (1988) called those in this role the catalysts, meaning change agents who helped make the pitfalls of the normal way of doing things "obvious" (p. 108). At Farpoint Middle School, the principal used this same term to describe one of the individuals in the core group: "She was a catalyst, . . . a go getter" (Interview with Q, 1/9/96, p. 22, line 43).

Most importantly, the two categories of "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) formed an alliance. The link between them was a common interest in solving the problems of the school's existing paradigm. The "mavericks" (Barker, 1992, p. 63) inside Farpoint Middle School, for instance, found some of the answers they sought from the new ideas of the "tinkerers" (Barker, 1992, p. 64). Fullan (1993) emphasized the importance of teachers with moral purpose and change agency skills "intersecting with other like minded individuals and groups" (p. 40) to move schools forward with "continuous improvements" (p. 40).

As some members of the group later commented, the changes may have never happened if this informal group had not been formed. "None of us could have done it by ourselves, or would have. . . . No way!" (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95, p. 25, lines 17-18, 20). Smith and Scott (1990) referred to the function of such teacher leaders in their research of collaborative schools. They explained that faculty members

tended to describe their teacher leaders, in addition to other characteristics, as those who demonstrated the "initiative and willingness to experiment with new ideas" (Smith & Scott, 1990, p. 15). The initiative and know-how of individuals in this core group were recognized by others connected to Farpoint Middle School, as evidenced by faculty comments (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T and U, 1/25/96; Interview with Q, 1/9/96).

The possibility of a "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) school wide increased when this group of teacher leaders took the initiative to capitalize on the support available at the local university. Connor and Lake (1988) explained that this is a function of a change agent inside an organization called the "resource linker" (Connor & Lake, 1988, p. 109). Its definition referred to applying "various financial, people, and knowledge resources" (Connor & Lake, 1988, p. 109) toward changing the status quo within the organization. Therefore, the complete group was composed initially of teachers "linked with" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 3) university professors.

Eventually, the whole school faculty, particularly the principal, began seeking the support of and input from the local university's middle grades department. As explained by Barth (1990), and through the examples of Hamman (1992), Neufeld and McGowan (1993) and Karr et al. (1994), the development of working relationships between the university and the public school was difficult and unusual, but not impossible. In addition, Barth (1990) highlighted the need for "agencies that can mediate between the cultures of school and university" (pp. 110-111). However, for Farpoint Middle School no such agency existed. As in Karr et al. (1994), this

function was accomplished by a group of teachers, joined by willing professors, who created a "bridge" (p. 7) between the two institutions.

Fullan (1993) agreed with the importance of this bridge-like function as a component of the "connection with the wider environment" (p. 38) and a critical part of change agency in schools. In Karr et al. (1994) the principal initiated the contact and the teachers followed. In this study of Farpoint Middle School, however, the relationship was initiated by teachers who approached professors for help. It was continued by the principal and total staff who invited the expertise of local university consultants. According to Barth (1990), relationships initiated by those in higher education run the risk of becoming entirely prescriptive, and therefore, resented. He encouraged both schools and universities to seek such relationships, however, explaining his confidence that "school and university can become members of the same community of learners and leaders" (Barth, 1990, p. 121).

Barth (1990) further explained the need for schools to specifically develop a "community of leaders" (p. 9). While his definition included every individual involved in the school, he particularly discussed the need for teachers to have and to take advantage of opportunities to lead. The core group of teachers at Farpoint Middle School demonstrated this concept. Then, through individual input into school decisions and personal adoption of the middle school tenets, the staff of Farpoint Middle School began to develop the teacher component of the "community of leaders" (Barth, 1990, p. 9) concept. Eventually, the small core group of teacher leaders widened in size to include many teachers in the school. During the "later years," the leadership and initiative of a large percentage of teachers was recognized (Interview with S, 1/11/96).

However, as shown by leadership research, the work of the principal continued to be crucial to the shift of the organization. Rosenholtz (1989) found that principals in "high consensus schools" (p. 38) actually reshaped and repaired the fabric of schools that "had come altogether unraveled" (p. 208). Lieberman and Miller (1984) also explained that "the atmosphere and what is encouraged or discouraged among teachers are intimately tied to the behaviors of the principal" (p. 30). The principal of Farpoint Middle School, as expressed by Smith and Scott (1990), became the "key actor" (p. 42) for facilitating the collaboration of staff members at the school level. His role was undiminished, and as pointed out by Flanigan and Gray (1995), his function continued to be that of focusing the school on the needs and instruction of students.

During the "middle years," the principal of Farpoint Middle School became the "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71) who listened to the new ideas of the "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54), learned more about these ideas from external sources, and eventually influenced the organization to shift. As the "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71), the principal made what Kuhn (1970) described as a "decision . . . made on faith" (p. 158) toward the new paradigm and helped to "create the critical mass which drives the new paradigm the remainder of the way" (Barker, 1992, p. 72).

Furthermore, the "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) was made possible through a corresponding change in the power relationships of the county and the school. Yet, according to Sarason (1990), this was a difficult but necessary task. "The strength of the status quo--its underlying axioms, its pattern of power relationships, its sense of tradition and therefore what seems right, natural, and proper--almost automatically rules

out options for changes in that status quo" (Sarason, 1990, p. 35).

Sarason (1990) asserted that, because schools were like other intricate institutions that typically accommodated without requiring real change, change in power relationships was necessary for shifts to occur.

Though the county had not formally adopted a site-based management or shared decision-making plan, teachers at Farpoint Middle School during the "middle years" experienced an increased level of empowerment, as defined by Restine (1995) and Richardson et al. (1995). First, empowerment at the school, like the change process itself, evolved. Empowerment increased at the county level with the superintendent's requests for school level input into decisions (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with V, 1/22/96). Almost immediately, the principal inside the school began listening more to teachers. Lucas et al. (1991) emphasized this order of events by stating "the degree to which principals are willing to share decision-making rights with teachers is directly proportional to the perception of their own discretion and decision making" (p. 62). Neufeld and McGowan (1993), in writing of the principal's willingness to "share the power of leadership" (p. 250), concurred.

At first, the principal of Farpoint Middle School invited input from a small group of "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54), but soon he involved all teachers (Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95; Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96). As pointed out by Neufeld and McGowan (1993), these overtures began to give teachers the "authority to make significant decisions about the students for whom they hold responsibility" (p. 249). The superintendent further supported and validated this process by asking teachers to voice their opinions about the move toward the middle school concept (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with V,

1/22/96). Therefore, when other situations affecting the school arose later, such as those created by the regional self-study, the school-based staff development model, and the federal pressure to heterogeneously group students, those at the school were ready and willing to share their input (Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96; Interview with group T and U, 1/25/96). Thus, empowerment at the school level was not mandated from above. Rather, this shift in the power relationships, with the valuing and inviting of teacher input at the school, was modeled and supported from above at the county level. This, in turn, further facilitated the change process at the school.

Therefore, the changes at Farpoint Middle School occurred neither because of bottom-up, nor top-down pressure. As Fullan's (1994) external/internal paradox suggested, the changes occurred because individuals on the inside; some teachers, then the principal, and finally the whole school; accepted a new paradigm, all in an external environment which provided supportive nudges from outside. Marsh and Odden (1991) agreed by explaining that a "fit" (p. 234) is needed between top-down and bottom-up aspects of the organizational environment. Pascale (1990) concluded that internal and external pressures may be the key to effective change in organizations, adding that "change flourishes in a 'sandwich.' When there is consensus above, and pressure below, things happen" (p. 126).

As explained by Fullan (1993) and Barth (1990), the changes going on inside an organization had the potential to affect the external environment. Farpoint Middle School influenced the wider circles of its external supporters. For instance, the county benefited from the change agency skills of the middle school teachers engaged in planning staff

development activities (Interview with T and U, 1/25/96). Similarly, it benefited from the middle school's experience with limited heterogeneous grouping prior to receiving federal pressure to mandate such a county-wide change (Interview with V, 1/22/96). The local university benefited from its proximity with Farpoint Middle School as an evolving environment for providing practical experiences for prospective teachers (Interview with S, 1/11/96; Interview with N, 2/5/96).

The "paradigm shift" (Barker, 1992, p. 37) at Farpoint Middle School took place over an extended period of time, and it occurred from the inside out. Leadership was provided alternately by the principal with his goals, a core group of teachers or "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54), the principal as "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71), and finally, the total staff with their attention to the moral purpose of individuals and the collective whole. The leaders depended on their increasing level of change agency skill and, particularly from the "middle years" forward, their specific capacities for personal vision-building, inquiry, mastery, and collaboration.

The change processes were facilitated and supported by the external environment, through the information provided and the power relationships modeled. A "bridge" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7) between these two environments, internal and external, was initiated and created from the inside out to take advantage of external support opportunities. In the end, the emphasis of the moral purpose for meeting the needs of students led to the inception of an adult "community of learners and leaders," (Barth, 1990, p. 121) as well as a move toward building a "learning organization" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4).

Implications

Examined under a wide-angle lens, this ethnohistorical study of Farpoint Middle School's change process provided clues as to possible ramifications for other schools, teachers, principals, county office personnel and school boards, and institutions of higher education. The change processes of this single school, in its external environment, suggested that internal change within a supportive environment was possible.

Organizationally, this was significant as this research study pointed out that changes may occur over an extended period of time. In addition, change processes may be initiated from inside such organizations. In fact, due to its very nature, substantive change may only be possible in schools from the inside out. The "paradigm effect" (Barker, 1992, p. 86) and the need to respect the moral purposes of individuals in a school may prevent real change from occurring either in a short period of time or from outside mandates.

The implications of this ethnohistorical study for teachers revolve around the concepts of leadership, moral purpose, and change agency skills. According to Fullan (1993), the moral purposes of individual teachers and groups of staff within the school may act as a guide for the change processes. Internal changes may not be possible to mandate from one individual inside the school to another, because of the preventative influence of the "paradigm effect" (Barker, 1992, p. 86). Therefore, attention to and consideration of the moral purpose of each individual appears to be critical. Similarly, the encouragement and development of change agency skills at the school level can influence the process of change over time. Teachers may not be able to work toward a school level moral purpose, such as more

fully meeting the needs of students, without the capacity to act as learning, improving, critically-reflecting change agents.

Together, attention to these two areas can prevent teachers inside schools from becoming completely ensnared within the existing paradigm and may allow some of them to act as "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54). Eventually, this approach to teachers as leaders can establish collaboratives of adult learners and leaders inside the school, with the ultimate goal of involving every person connected to the school in this "learning organization" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4).

While the individual participation of teachers inside organizations is important, the collaboration of groups may be crucial to the process of change in schools. Such groups can be informal and may simply be composed of individuals who get together outside of school. Their function may begin as change agents, people who have made up their minds that they can influence the direction of the school in a positive way. Their function may extend to include building a "bridge" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7) from the internal to the external environment. Their role may involve seeking support through agencies such as universities and colleges.

The implications from this study for principals in schools involve their leadership roles. The principal's leadership function can be widened to include the change agent function described as "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71). He or she, in this role, may join the "paradigm shifter" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) in assisting the success of the change from one paradigm to another. This role insists that the principal listen to the ideas of others, particularly teachers, and be receptive to possible solutions that will help the school improve. It does not, however, mean that the principal has

to be personally responsible for devising new strategies for improvement and solutions to existing or perceived problems.

In addition, the principal's leadership may reflect to the staff the power relationship passed down from the district level. The principal may be the most influential model of this power relationship, whether positive or negative. In a supportive external environment this means that the principal may encourage staff members inside the school to develop and use change agency skills. Individual and group moral purposes may be more easily shared among staff members. This, in turn, may lead to greater teacher leadership and toward the development of a "community of learners and leaders" (Barth, 1990, p. 121) within the school. Eventually, the modeling of a supportive power relationship may give the school, and those involved with it, an enhanced voice and heightened capacity to affect change from the inside out.

The external environments in which schools operate include county, state, regional, and federal circles. For these, the implications of this study are obvious. Changes can occur from the inside of schools toward the outside. In fact, changes that substantially affect the organization appear to be unlikely if mandated from the top-down. However, schools may not successfully change unless their external environments facilitate the changes. Therefore, the external environments and those responsible for maintaining them may enhance the change process by providing support and assistance for positive changes that are initiated inside the schools.

Similarly, change is a process that may occur over an extended period of time; the forces of change may not be started and stopped as if they were a new machine or invention. External support for change, may need to be pervasive and constant as well. If this support is turned on and

off, increased and decreased, over short periods of time, internally initiated changes may not have a chance to surface or to survive.

The power relationship explored in this study between the external environment and the school also has implications for the external agencies. Opportunities inside schools for input and use of change agency skills may merge with articulation of individual and group moral purposes. However, the success of these opportunities may depend upon the power relationship between the external and internal environments. The leadership model inside schools may actually mirror the power relationships practiced from the top-down.

Furthermore, structural changes, strategic planning, or vision development may not lead the way toward changes; they may be outgrowths of change. Change processes appear to be unlikely if mandated from the top-down, and "paradigm shifts" (Barker, 1992, p. 37), by definition, begin at the individual level and build toward the school level. Therefore, while the external environment has the power to impose structural changes on schools, as well as mandate the creation of school-level vision statements, substantial change at the school level may not be the result. Support for positive, school-initiated change may be the optimal approach from the top-down. As the internal changes take place, structures that need to be changed can become evident. As school-initiated change develops, vision-building and strategic planning may follow.

Finally, benefits of the internal changes within schools can be shared with the external environment. This, in turn, can further facilitate the improvement of all environments in which schools operate. The external environment may take on a "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71) function like that of the internal leader and be ready to capitalize on the

opportunity for self-renewal stimulated by the internal environment's changes.

Specifically, the implications of this study affect the external role of the university or college in changing schools. According to the data from this study, colleges and universities can impact the moral purpose and change agency skills of teachers. In addition, institutions of higher learning can provide support for changes in the schools, seeking out opportunities to create one side of a "bridge" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7) between the external and internal environments of schools.

Recommendations

This study represented only one small piece of a mural whose change theme was highly complex and constantly shifting. It showed the events, roles, and shifts made at one school during a bounded (Stake, 1988) period of eighteen years. The change process in other locations and in other time periods will always reflect differences in circumstances. Therefore, care must be taken to avoid drawing broad generalizations from this study. The recommendations are aimed at careful application of the existing theory. The possible implications and ramifications of this study are tentative, because they are built on a synthesis of theory from various fields such as business and science. Not all have been thoroughly applied to educational settings; additional research is needed to further validate these findings.

One of the recommendations from this study is to encourage individuals to share their moral purposes again and again. Once during a long period of years may not enough. As long as these moral purposes are active and articulated, they can act as a constant litmus test to determine the appropriateness of the newest instructional trends as compared with the moral purpose of the school and its members. On a wider scale, this study

suggests that each individual inside schools has to personally accept and understand the relationship between his or her own moral purpose and any new paradigm before making a shift. More research is needed to verify this point.

Further study is recommended to determine how individuals within schools can work from their own paradigms and personal moral purposes to develop a new paradigm for the school. In the meantime, the results of this study suggest that attention to and consideration of individual moral purposes, coupled with enhancement of change agency skills, appears to be one way to affect change from inside schools. The role of teachers as leaders and possible "paradigm shifters" (Barker, 1992, p. 54) should be considered in additional studies of school change processes.

However, even if further study shows this function to be crucial, teachers may have to acknowledge their own role as change agents before internal changes can result. In the words of one administrator about the teachers involved in this study, "I think they don't get enough credit for the changes that have. . . come about" (Interview with S, 1/11/96, p. 3, lines 38-39). Do teachers know of their own capacities to affect schools in positive ways for the improvement of student education? The areas of teacher-initiated change and informal leadership of teacher groups need further exploration and attention.

Similarly, the leadership role of the principal needs to be further examined to determine how principals can facilitate change. Two specific areas need to be addressed, including the principal as "paradigm pioneer" (Barker, 1992, p. 71) and the principal as school-based modeler for the external environment's power relationships with the school. The latter may directly impact the capacity of the principal to encourage teachers to share

their individual moral purposes, to focus on a school-wide moral purpose, and to develop change agency skills within the organization.

Therefore, more study is also needed to understand exactly how external environments affect schools and their change processes. The power relationships between the external and internal environments are factors affecting the capacity of this particular school for change. These relationships need to be further explored, along with external environments' actions related to the length of time needed for school change. The results of such research may offer more specific recommendations for schools' external environments, particularly with regard to the supportive function these can provide for internal change.

One other implication of this study for external environments is that structural changes and vision statements may be outgrowths of change processes, not factors that cause change in schools. Further study is needed to validate this concept. If this implication bears the weight of additional study, the future recommendation may be for external environments to recognize and act on the frustrations created by the existing structures in internal environments engaged in positive "paradigm shifts" (Barker, 1992, p. 37). The support of the external environment may then take the form of assisting the school in devising better structures and statements of future direction. Additional research may also assist in verifying if and how the working relationship between the external and internal environments may enhance the positive changes in both.

Concurrently, more research is needed to determine to what extent the external environment of the college or university can impact upon schools. To date, very little empirical research has been conducted that explores this relationship except through the impact of student teaching or

inservice programs. Furthermore, almost all instances available deal with university-initiated situations. What is needed is more information about relationships initiated by public schools.

Among the implications of this study are that institutions of higher learning can influence the moral purpose and enhance change agency skills of teachers, support changes going on inside schools, and help build a "bridge" (Karr et al., 1994, p. 7) across the typical distance between the two. If future studies show that these functions are indeed within the grasp of higher education, the change agent role of the college or university may shift accordingly. For instance, how can educational opportunities enhance the change agency skills of teachers to act upon and prevent loss of their individual moral purposes? Perhaps additional research will show that the preservice and inservice opportunities actually available to teachers need to reflect the topics related to teacher change agency and informal leadership.

In short, future studies need to examine the connections between people as catalysts for change. This includes connections between teachers, between teachers and principals, and between those inside and outside schools. Further research is necessary to determine how small groups of people working toward change from inside schools can connect with one another and with the wider environment. Particularly, the connections between schools and universities, but initiated by schools, need to be further explored.

Finally, an overarching theme of this study was understanding change in an educational setting. While the business field contains more examination of change literature than does the educational field, educational institutions and the leaders within them need both a theoretical and practical base of knowledge about change. More research and writing on the topic of

educational change is desperately needed. Without this knowledge base, change will continue to be a force that is not only "ubiquitous and relentless" (Fullan, 1993, p. vii), but one that is feared and resisted.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Data Sources

I. List of Interviews

- A. Interview with group A through C, 12/28/95
- B. Interview with group D through L, 1/9/96
- C. Interview with Q, 1/9/96
- D. Interview with S, 1/11/96
- E. Interview with V, 1/22/96
- F. Interview with M, 1/23/96
- G. Interview with group T through U, 1/25/96
- H. Interview with K, 2/2/96
- I. Interview with N, 2/5/96

II. List of Board of Education Minutes

- A. BOE minutes, 3/4/80
- B. BOE minutes, 3/18/80
- C. BOE minutes, 3/1/83
- D. BOE minutes, 6/7/83
- E. BOE minutes, 10/2/84
- F. BOE minutes, 12/4/84
- G. BOE minutes, 2/5/85
- H. BOE minutes, 5/7/85
- I. BOE minutes, 6/4/85
- J. BOE minutes, 12/2/85
- K. BOE minutes, 9/8/86
- L. BOE minutes, 3/7/88
- M. BOE minutes, 5/8/89
- N. BOE minutes, 10/9/89
- O. BOE minutes, 5/12/90

- P. BOE minutes, 6/11/90
- Q. BOE minutes, 2/11/91
- R. BOE minutes, 3/8/93
- S. BOE minutes, 4/12/93
- T. BOE minutes, 9/13/93
- U. BOE minutes, 1/26/94

III. List of Other Sources

- A. LDR 856 paper, 2/5/87
- B. Scrapbook of Spring Festival, 1987
- C. Teacher Data Sheets and Resume'
- D. Curriculum Fair Committee Members, Memo, 2/20/90
- E. Teacher Handout, 5/7/90
- F. Teacher Handout, 5/14/90
- G. Teacher Survey, 5/16/90
- H. Teacher Handout, Spring, 1991
- I. BOE Policy GAD, prior to 6/10/91
- J. Farpoint Middle School Self-study for Initial Accreditation, 91-92
- K. Visiting Committee Report, 5/10/92-5/12/92

Appendix B

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**

October 17, 1995

Ms. Jody Woodrum
Department of Educational Leadership, Technology, and Research
L.B. 8143
Georgia Southern University

Dear Ms. Woodrum:

I have reviewed your proposed study entitled "Change Theory in the Middle: An Ethnohistorical Case Study of a Middle School in Rural, Southeast Georgia." After reviewing the proposal and the informed consent cover letter/form, it appears that only minimal risk exists for the research subjects. I am, therefore, on behalf of the Institutional Review Board able to certify that adequate provisions have been planned to protect the rights of the human research subjects.

However, prior to data collection, please submit copies of the interview protocol (the "structured and nonstructured" questions) that you will be using so that the IRB file for this investigation will be complete.

If circumstances change or unforeseen events occur, please notify the IRB immediately. Upon completion of your research notify the IRB so that your file may be closed.

I wish you every success with this and future research efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas L. Case".

Thomas L. Case, PhD, Chair
Institutional Review Board
Georgia Southern University

Appendix C

Shift toward Middle School Concept

